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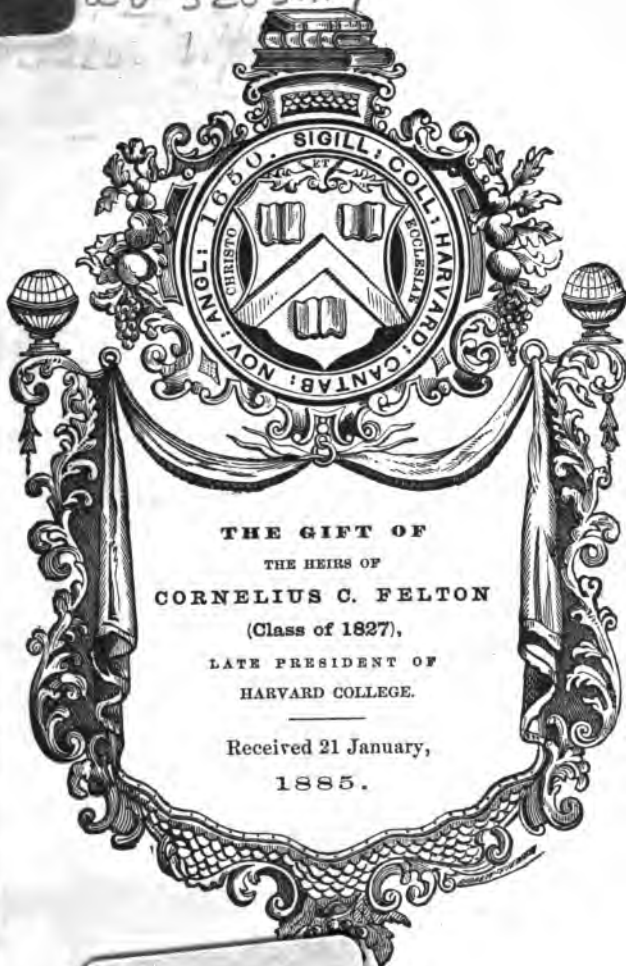
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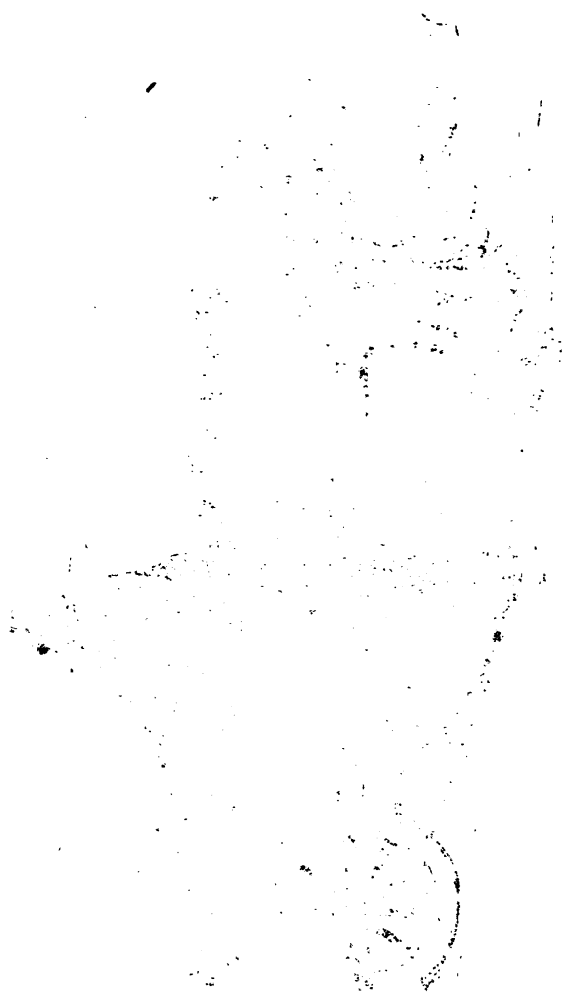


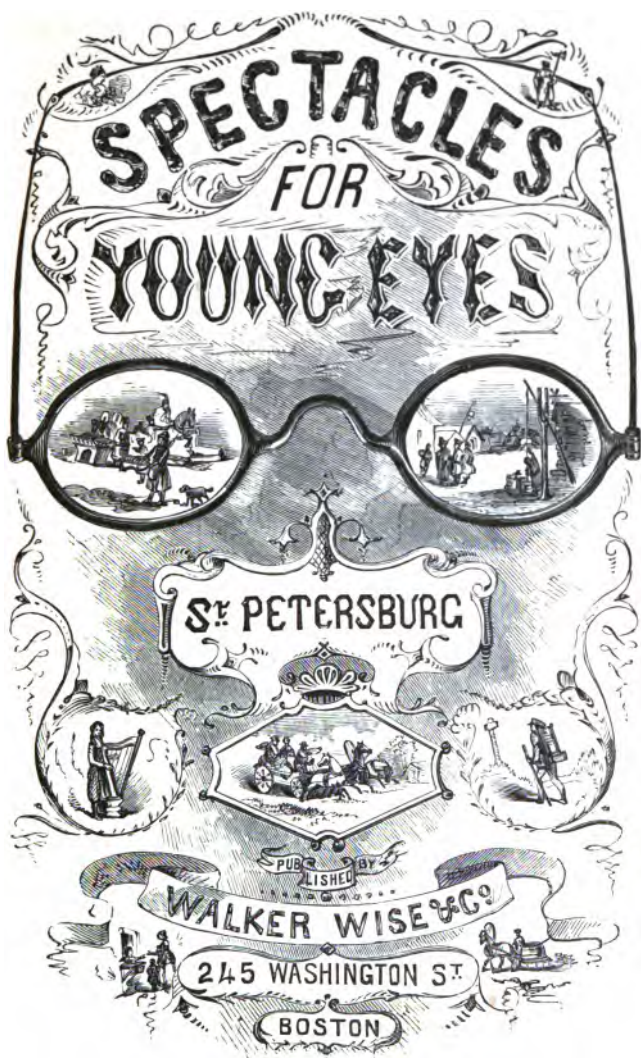
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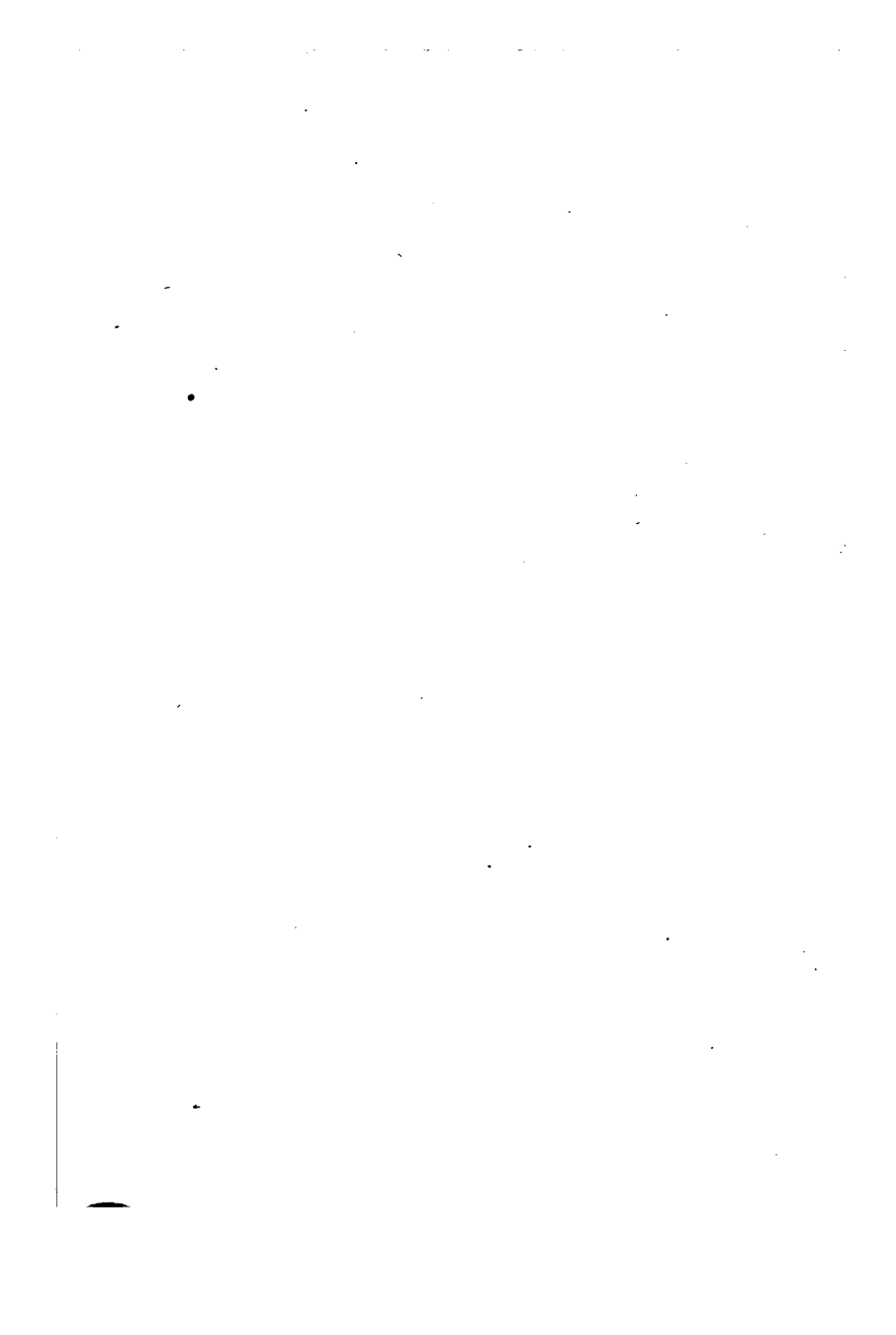
AFFECTIONATELY

Dedicated

TO

OUR LITTLE RUSSIANS,

LEZINKA AND BABINKA.



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SPECTACLES.

CHAPTER I.

A WONDERFUL COUNTRY.

FAR, far away, in that wonderful country where the sun shines all night, and where, when you wake in the morning, you find he has risen before you, even if you try to get up before sunrise, in summer ;—in that country, where the domes of the churches are covered with gold, that glitters like water in the sun, and where the people talk in a strange language, of which we have not even learned the letters, there lived a family of children, who were born in America, and whom we last saw gathering sea-weeds and shells on the shores of the Atlantic. Their father, James Hamilton, has been sent as engineer to this strange country, where there were no railroads till recently, and the children came with him ; they will tell you all they saw, if you will listen. If you should chance to look out of the window, to see the inhabitants of

this strange country, you would see the men who happen to be passing by have generally very light blue eyes, and very light or very red hair, as if all the warmth of the climate had condensed in the inhabitants. What a pity these red heads should not feel as warm as they look! — for it is a very cold country where they are, and it seems as if they had flared up in vain to keep out the cold. Our very neighbor, who lives next door, had his nose frozen yesterday!

If you should walk out into the street, perhaps some one will run up to you, and rub a snowball in your face, and before you have time to be angry with him, he will say politely, —

“Your nose is freezing!”

Then, of course, you feel very grateful! — but what a remarkable country this is, where you are grateful to a person for what, in America, we should call an indignity. Everything is so strange here!

The snow powder in the air is so thick, that it almost blinds your eyes, for the incessant frost makes the ice so hard, that horses' feet going over it raise such a mist that you can hardly see. A wonderful country it is! Where the ice is frozen like stone, so that it flies into a fine dusty powder; as on a flinty road, and where the people run through the streets, to keep from freezing to death.

There are no wells to be dug there ; but there is a river where the waters are as clear as crystal, and along the river in winter there is a road on the ice, with little fir-trees planted on each side of it, to mark the way. It is so fearfully cold in this country, that sometimes a man can row across the river in a boat, and see bits of ice just floating in the water beside him ; and if he means to come back a few hours later, he will find he must leave his boat behind him on the shore, and that he can walk home on solid ice, over the river, without even wetting his feet !

Then footpaths and carriage-roads are marked out on it ; and the little green fir-trees are planted along the sides to mark the way, and shorten it for travellers, who would be lost on the ice but for this precaution. Far down the river, refreshment houses are put up for weary men to rest in, and the frozen river is as firm as the earth.

There is one thing that is still more strange ; perhaps you will not believe it. It is said that the ice on the frozen road is so condensed in winter, by the weight and pressure of the crowd of people travelling over it, that it does not melt so soon as the rest of the river. Then people walk and laugh on it, with the green water roll-

ing on each side of them, and the frozen road appears as hard as ever. But it is so dangerous then, the police have to keep guard to prevent the foolish people—who are so fond of their river—losing their lives by their carelessness.

When the ice-roads are all gone, they have strange bridges made of boats, which can be put up and taken down in a few hours. This is because the ice floats down the river in such heavy masses that it would destroy an ordinary bridge, and because the soil is so very marshy on the banks that it would be troublesome to make a solid foundation for one. These bridges are taken to pieces, two or three times in a day, when the heavy ice comes floating by, and are removed easily, when the river begins its rapid freezing.

There is a magnificent city built on the marshy banks of this river, and on the small islands in it. On one of these islands there is a little palace that it would please a child to see, and seems made for the Empress to use, if she should be tired of being an Empress, and should wish to be a child again,—

“As if a rose could shut and be a bud again.”

In this miniature palace there is everything diminutive,—little chairs, little tables, little couches, two tiny cups and saucers, and everything

is quite perfect. There is a little bridge that connects the island with the main-land, so that it can be drawn up, and no one can pass to the island unless the Empress should wish to see them, nor can go away unless she chooses. Even an Empress must wish sometimes to play at quiet life, as you may have wished to be an Empress—in your play.

Another palace in this beautiful city has a garden, heated by brick vaults beneath it, to make an eternal summer, and trees with nets of gold wire over them, to keep beautiful tropical birds confined there, where the Empress Catherine II. fed them daily with her own imperial hands.

This rare city is St. Petersburg. Have you guessed that this strange country is Russia? Far beyond England, Ireland, and Scotland! Beyond Germany, where the people always seem to have a dreadful hoarseness and sore-throat, and yet they can sit out of doors and drink beer under the trees all day. Beyond Holland, where the towns are built in the water. And almost out to the wonderful Chinese, where the children wear their hair braided in long tails, and have their feet bandaged to keep them small enough to fit their little turned-up slippers.

Are we not grateful for being born in this free country, America? To be sure, there are slaves here still, while the Russian serfs have been recently liberated by their generous Emperor. We think we could not live under an Emperor, even if he can free slaves without bloodshed, for we are Americans, who cannot be happy under a king.

Once, in Russia, one of our lowly-minded and democratic Americans, who did not know it was pride in him, I suppose, would not stoop to bow to the Emperor Paul who was passing. As it is the custom in Russia for all persons to remain uncovered in the presence of the Emperor, the American was arrested, and carried before a magistrate who inquired the reason of this disrespect. He gave in excuse the answer, that he *did not see* his Majesty.

With great solemnity, he was then shown into another room, where there was a table covered with spectacles of all kinds and sizes, and he was told to choose a pair that would fit his eyes. He selected them in haste, and was then ordered to wear them as long as he remained in the country, that he might be sure always to *see the Emperor!*

Many years after this, the gentleman was met by an old friend in London, who found him still

wearing the spectacles. For his eyes had become so accustomed to the use of them, that he could not see distinctly without them.

Let me hope, that through my Russian Spectacles you will not fail to recognize royalty!

CHAPTER II.

THE PALE CITY.

Now picture to yourselves a city so pale that it looks like a phantom city, for it is almost shadowless; white marble palaces, with rows of handsome white stuccoed houses, with tall pillars, are on each side of the broad streets. A pale, lead-colored sky overhead, whose faint sunshine casts no shadow on the snow in the streets,—snow, that has not become soiled and muddy by frequent thaws, but is so crisp and hard that it is like flint; and spring seems too far off to be dreamed of. Then a white, frozen river, the river Neva, and if the snow should be falling,—which is so hard and congealed, that even our Emperor does not need an umbrella in it,—then you feel—seen through the faint mist—as if the whole city were the unsubstantial fabric of a dream, and might fade from your sight like a vision.

You would feel this still more if you knew that it was built on a morass, whose substance is so shifting that the ground shakes beneath your

feet in the spring; and that the sidewalks and paved streets, formed of blocks of wood, are continually undergoing repairs as block after block sinks beneath the surface. Would not you think that Peter the Great, in founding his beautiful city here, enjoyed the difficulties which would have prevented a weaker character from undertaking it? For this pale, phantom city is St. Petersburg; it is the home of the children in our story, and was founded in 1703, by Peter I., Alexeievitch, Czar of Russia.

When I say Peter enjoyed the difficulties of founding his city on a spot that had no foundation, for at the time he had no right to the place, and often during the building of the palaces the hammer and saw were dropped, and the sword taken up, in war against the Swedes, to whom it belonged, and from whom he wrested it. He knew that it would be accessible to all foreign nations, and having learned that his people were deficient in commerce and navigation, he went away to Saardam, in Holland, to learn these, and worked in a ship-yard as a common laborer, receiving his wages at night, and living on the plain food that he could buy with what he earned. Sometimes the master ship-builder would cry out, "Peter Zimmerman, help lift that log there, why are you loitering!" and the

Emperor would lift the log and work hard like a poor laborer. Afterwards he went to England, and was permitted by the English king, William the Third, to have free access to see all that he wished that might improve his people, and on Peter's return to Russia he helped build a small vessel with his own hands, and a small house, which are still preserved by the Russians with care and veneration, and which are the first foundation of the great Russian navy, and of this magnificent city of the Czars.

Peter entered the army as a private, even as a drummer-boy, and worked his way up to be a great soldier. You will ask if he was of humble origin. No! He was son of an Emperor, but his sister Sophia, who was older than he, had great ambition and some talent, and she tried to keep Peter beneath her, and even tried to make him a weak and a wicked man; but he spurned the low temptations placed before him; and when she attempted to take his life, then he overthrew the conspirators; his sister Sophia was shut up in a convent, and Peter began to rule the vast country he inherited from his father. And the desire to improve and civilize his people induced him to go abroad, and he compelled large numbers of the young nobles to go also, that they might bring home new customs.

On his return, he obliged the Russians to form new habits of life, and put in practice what he had learned.

Then he coveted a port on the Baltic; and as Charles XII. of Sweden was only fifteen years old, Peter and some of the surrounding sovereigns thought it would be a good time to take possession of some Swedish provinces.

The Russians commenced the war, and laid siege to Narva. But Charles advanced to defend his kingdom, and attacked their camp, and defeated an army of 80,000 men with only 8,000. But then Peter was not in that battle.

What did Peter say to this,—was he discouraged, do you think? No! Peter only said, "I knew the Swedes would beat us, but in time they will teach us to beat them."

So Peter improved the discipline of his armies, increased their strength, and conquered Ingria, Livonia, and the city of Narva. In this newly-conquered country, on a desert island, he founded the city which I told you about, the city of St. Petersburg.

Afterwards, at the battle of Pultowa, Peter defeated Charles, who escaped, wounded, with three hundred men. Then he was so overjoyed at his success that he promoted his officers, and because he himself had taken a Swedish com-

mander prisoner and had a ball shot through his hat, he promoted himself to the rank of major-general. So, having seen the drummer rise to be major-general, we can leave him now, the "Emperor of all the Russias," which was the title he last bore, and which still descends to his successors.

The simple habits of Peter's life are also imitated in a great degree by his successors. The driving out with a single pair of horses, and entering the ranks as a private soldier, are followed as a national custom by all the Emperors.

An American lady and her husband, while driving out quietly in the country, met the present Emperor and Empress in a plain vehicle, without outriders, and the American lady gently looked at the Russian one, thinking she was a pleasant person, but not handsome, when her husband exclaimed, hurriedly, "It is the Emperor! Bow! why don't you bow!" So, my dear little ones, you can see that an Emperor and Empress look exactly like other people, and are not fond of all the grandeur that perhaps you may sometimes envy them.

It was the wish of Peter the Great, that his subjects should learn the manners and customs of other nations; when he founded his magnificent city, where no fine trees nor flowers

grow, but where birch and firs, instead of large oaks and elms, are waving; and where hot-house plants and fruits in profusion make the winter seem like summer. The immense wealth that is gathered there can buy luxuries we hardly think of, and peaches and strawberries in winter are as common as blueberries in summer here.

At the schools in St. Petersburg the children are made to learn their lessons in different languages at once, and to recite and translate them from one language to another, and learn these all at the same time. Could you study your history in French, and recite it in German; and learn your spelling lesson in Russ, and your grammar in English, as these children have to do? And yet you think your school is very tiresome, when you feel idle.

One strange thing happened! — the people began to forget their own native tongue. They neglected to use it, French was so common, — and everybody understands French, but everybody does not understand Russ; so the Emperor began to think there would be no national tongue, and he gave out word that young children should be obliged to learn and to speak the Russian language. But they do not learn less French, English, and German.

You meet little children talking who speak all

these fluently, but they mix them together in a funny way that would make you laugh. A Russian child will say, "Di te me bon-bons!" (Give me some sugar-plums!); or, if she is delighted with anything you give her, will cry out, "*Etta pitty tam!*" (That is pretty!); or "*Etta mamma's domo,*" (That is mamma's house,) if she is out walking and comes home.

One thing I have noticed, — which is very reasonable, — our baby, (or "*babinka,*" as they call him here,) our baby has so many languages to select from, in learning to talk, that it seems to doubt which to speak first; for though he understands and bows, if you speak to him in either, he talks very little, and generally chooses the language his nurse speaks. For he says "*neate*" and "*da,*" for yes and no; but he looks dignified, and bows, (they are so extremely polite in Russia,) and does not condescend to chatter, as they do in New England at the same age.

It is surprising to see how these Yankee children gather up strange words and customs, with the same delight and amusement with which they gathered shells and pebbles on the sea-shore, where they were when we last left them.

But the red sea-weed, the bright pebbles, and the pearl shells





“left their beauty on the shore,
With the winds and waves and wild uproar.”

But these foreign customs and strange sights will never be erased from their memory.

Their mother is a pale, delicate lady, and very different from her husband, our old friend James Hamilton, whose vast stock of information and love of languages are especially valuable in a foreign country, and who gathers curiosities till we wonder whether his “brain will carry all he knows,” — while his wife is annoyed and perplexed to death by the continual questions that children are always asking.

“O mamma, mamma!” little Mary shouted, “there is a drosky going by, with three horses harnessed abreast, and one of them has his head tied down on one side, for show; what is that *for*, mamma?”

“That is the custom of the country, my dear,” she answered, gently.

When you have no reason to give, it is so much easier to say, “It is the custom of the country.” And I find Mrs. Hamilton always has that answer ready, and that it always satisfies the children.

There is an indescribable charm about living in a foreign country, that drives away homesickness; for the change is so great, you forget to

pine for home, and laugh instead, over the strange customs and habits of the people and the country you are in.

There is no gas needed here to light the streets in summer, for it is light enough to read your Bible at midnight (but I forget to do it, I am so busy looking out to see the men at work in the distant fields or unloading vessels at the wharf). And though at last we had to fasten up dark curtains to the windows to keep out the light, (for one must sleep at midnight, even if the world goes on the same outside,) a Russian nurse, who returned with us to America, complained bitterly of the gloomy nights there, and cried in her homesickness on account of the blackness.

Everything is so different here, one cannot even take a cup of tea — and what can be more simple than taking a cup of tea — without seeing this great difference. And the night we travellers first arrived, the boys ran in to their mother's room exclaiming, —

“Mamma, mamma, they have put lemon-juice into their tea, instead of cream! mamma!”

“And Lina bites off a bit of sugar from the lump at every mouthful she drinks; she can't stir it into her tea, and she can't eat it as we do. Let us stay always in this strange country, mamma, it is so much nicer than America.”

Their mother sighed gently ; she thought of the few years they might be obliged to remain in their new home, and of the simplicity of the child's heart, where the present moment is always the happiest.

"To-morrow," she said, "when you ride out to see the city, then you can tell better how you like this country."

"O yes ! To-morrow, to-morrow !" they shouted. And then they fell asleep, with the daylight still shining in their eyes, and dreaming of "to-morrow," as we all still hope and dream of a happier day !

CHAPTER III.

THE SHOPS. — THE STATUE OF PETER THE GREAT.

EARLY the next morning the children claimed their promise of a holiday. Why are you always so impatient, you children ?

You have not seen them yet, I forget ! First, there is little Mary ; she is so young that there is not much to say about her, — shall we leave her to grow up ? But then we *can* say she has very pink cheeks and very black eyes, and that she was often frightened in the dark. Are you frightened in the dark sometimes ? Then tell mamma at once ; it is the not telling that makes you feel frightened.

I knew a little boy once who was so brave, that his other brothers said to him, “ What makes *you* so brave ? ” For he went about the house the darkest nights without a candle and without fear. “ What makes you so brave ? ” they asked, — he was such a little fellow ! Quite confidentially he whispered, — and I will tell you the secret, — he said, “ I always say my prayers if I begin to feel frightened, and I feel quite safe.”

That brave boy became a great general, and to-day you hear the story of his courage, that he thought, when he lisped it, would never come out; but secrets always do come out. I would not advise you to have many.

For how should *I* know you were frightened in the dark? Because I was a child myself, once, — that is the reason.

Now about our Peter! He is a very small boy, with a very big head, and he is always asking questions, — such funny ones, too! If there is anything strange about this book, you must remember it is all Peter's, and not my fault!

When we do anything wrong, it is always somebody's fault, you know; — even away back as far as old Adam, who ate the apple that you read about in your Bible history. Well, even he said it was Eve, and not he, who was to blame. Ever since then we have made the same excuse. It did show a sad want of courage in Adam, and I am sorry everybody *takes after him*. For, if any one does wrong, people say it is the old Adam in him. So we blame Adam, and Adam blamed Eve, and we all go on forever blaming any one but ourselves, who ought to bear the blame.

And there is Walter! We had almost forgotten him! Walter thinks he is quite a man, and

when Peter and Mary go running by, he says, "Oh! those children they are so troublesome!" But he is a fine fellow, as we shall see; he has black eyes and hair, and his father thinks he will make a scholar some day. We hope not! his father is so very learned, that we could not bear very well to have two like him in the family!

As I began to tell you, the children were clamorous for a holiday. The caleche was ordered, and you see them all setting out for their first drive through St. Petersburg.

The huge placards and gilded signs which are so common in America are not seen at all in St. Petersburg. But they have a representation of whatever is sold in the shop hung up, like a picture, on the outside of it. You see the sign of the cake the woman is buying hanging over her head; it is called "Kaleitch." These pictures delighted the children.

"O Mary!" Peter shouted, "there are some gold spectacles, larger than those on the cover of your new book. Look! Mary, look!" as they passed the shop of an optician.

"And see that bear!—O mamma! see that bear! Do they sell bears there?"

"No," said Walter, composedly, "it is a fur store: look at the sables!" with a little silent contempt.



“And there is a fine ox, almost as handsome as Uncle John’s Star and Bright. I wonder how *they* would like to have their pictures taken, and hung up as a show,” said Peter, in delight.

“They would not take a picture of them,” said Walter, grandly. “The idea of a picture of a cow!”

"You are mistaken, my boy ; there are some very celebrated pictures of them. Some by Paul Potter, and others by Rosa Bonheur, who took great delight in painting animals. You can see the dew about the mouth, and almost fancy you can see them breathe."

"I believe the animals *do* look just the same here, — and so do the children!" said little Peter.

"Children are the same naughty things all over the world," said Walter, laughing.

"And mamma," screamed Peter in delight, "just hear that boy laugh ; he did not laugh in Russian."

But we all laughed at Peter, who felt quite ashamed ; and could not understand that he had said anything funny.

"What was it, papa?" he said, timidly. "I was so glad to hear him laugh ! It sounded so exactly like a country boy at home ; he is a peasant, I know by his dress, and his sandals made of bark."

"It is always refreshing to hear a good hearty laugh ! It is reviving, Peter ; I agree with you ; and where we hear so much Russ spoken, that we cannot yet understand, I think it is delightful to hear the universal language of old Mother Nature."

"Old Mother Nature's language is all he knows," said Walter; who was a little proud of his knowledge of French,—though he had not yet had occasion to use it, to see how little he knew!

"It is all I *need* to know, papa; they all laugh and cry, just as we do,—and if I am hungry, I can tell *you*," said the philosopher Peter.

"That is right. Make the best of it, my boy. Now look at that picture of a lady having her hair dressed; and there is another fainting."

"Are they killing her?" said Peter, half alarmed.

"O no! it is a surgeon with a lancet; and there are the barber with his razor, and a hair-dresser with his curling-irons, each intently engaged going on with his own pursuit, unheeding the rest."

"That is in character," said Mrs. Hamilton, "drawn according to life; it could not be better."

"And there is a party seated at a tea-table," said Walter. "That is a coffee-house. Look at the cups and saucers! And each person seems to be talking; and they look so smiling, it would attract some lonely traveller, if he felt cold or tired."

Not only pictures of the articles sold, but of

the customers trying them on, were seen. Some were so well done, that our little friend Peter began to tremble, and wonder if he should not be put in the picture too, without knowing it.

"For you know I was in the photograph at home, father," he said, anxiously, "and I never knew it, till it was sent to the house."

"That was because you would not keep still!" said Walter, patronizingly.

"The shopman would not care for having my little boy's picture, much as his Aunt Jeanie and Uncle John wished for it," said his father.

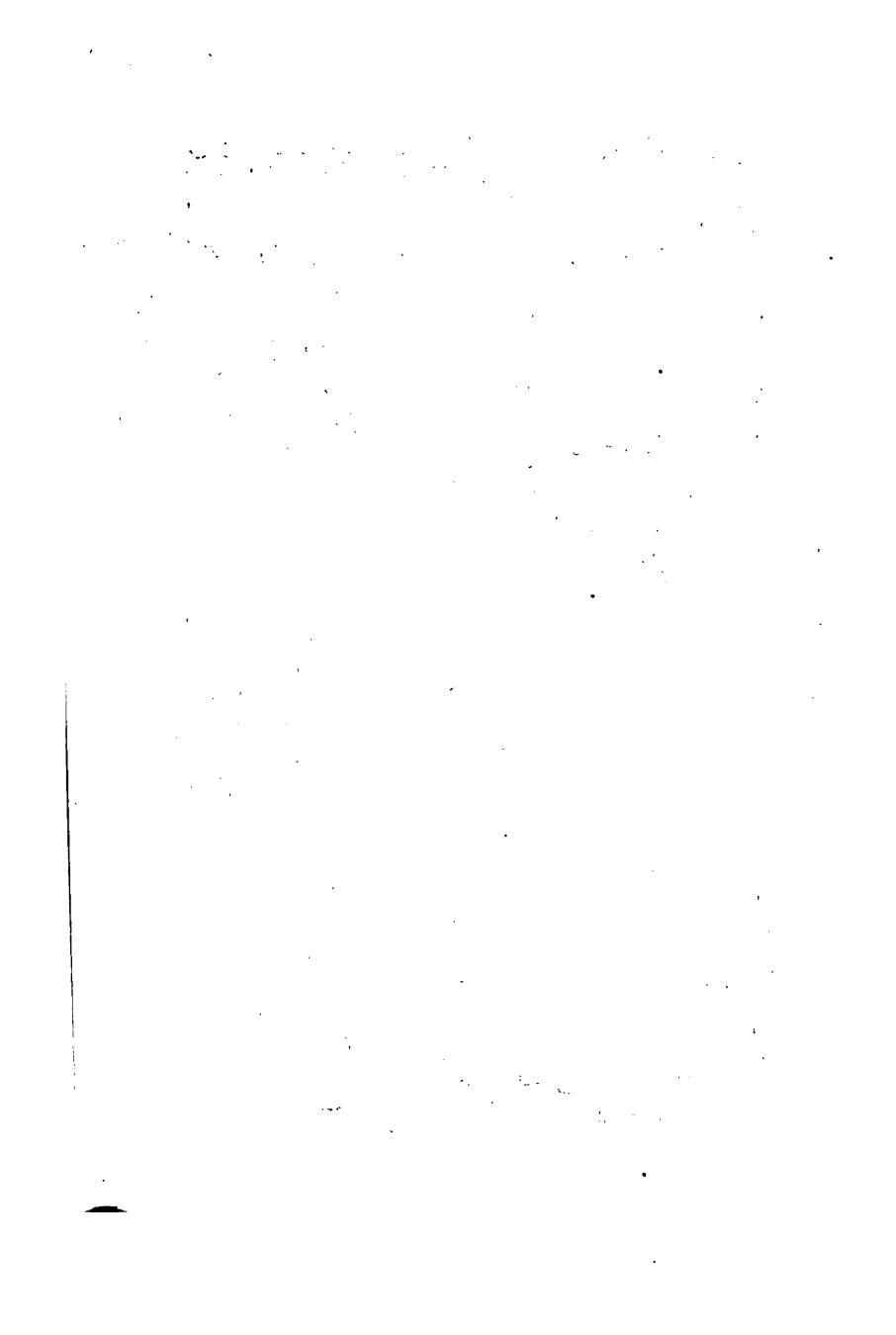
"Unless you should begin to *cry in English*," he said, laughingly, looking at Peter's grave countenance, "*that* might surprise them." Peter blushed, and looked up, consoled.

He certainly must have thought the whole party would be daguerrotyped! as the cows, the sheep, the bears, the hats and caps, the chickens, the fine ladies at the milliner's, with their bonnets and laces, the sheep at the butcher's, and the tea-party at the coffee-house, all seemed to be.

Peter would have enjoyed it more, if he had been a few years older; but the continual surprise, the unexpectedness of everything, not only amazed, but bewildered him.

The population in St. Petersburg is the most





varied you can imagine, and the children were as much amused by the different costumes exhibited in the street, as by the sights in a show-box.

"Can you tell us about the different soldiers, papa," asked Walter, who rejoiced in the possession of a new drum, and to whom the news of the war in America gave an interest and a glory to the subject.

"It would be difficult for me to tell you; there are so many. There are the Caucasian Guards, the Tartar Guards, the Finland Guards, and the Cossacks of different tribes, with scarlet and black turbans."

"What are those who are riding by now?" exclaimed Walter. "Not very handsome, I think!"

They were Cossacks, who hardly looked at them as they went by, dashing along, lance in hand, with dark, fierce faces.

"There are also grenadiers and cuirassiers; horse artillery and foot artillery; dragoons, lancers, and troops of the line.

"One thing you must see boys, the grand review, where we have often seen 150,000 troops reviewed at once, and with forty bands playing the Russian national hymn, when the bass notes of the deepest tones are sounded by the firing of cannon."

"Is it like music?" the boys asked.

"It is grand and solemn in the open air. There are some Circassians, boys! Look at them!"

The Circassians passed, and the boys remarked on the beauty of their glittering chain armor, shining like silver in the sun, and the fine color of their horses, groomed so well as to attract the attention of all travellers.

The different regiments here have one color throughout, for their horses. They are either all black, all gray, all white, or all red; and then, besides, the horses of each regiment hold their heads, and step in a peculiar manner, as they are drilled; some thrusting their noses high in the air, as if scenting the far-off battlefield; others with theirs bent between the forelegs, graceful and proud."

"Why, father, how odd they must look!"

"No, my boy, it is fine! Wait until you see the review, and you will be astonished at the accuracy and beauty of their movements. So many horses are killed in the training, that it takes away our pleasure in the wonderful sight. Our volunteer militia are not so accurate with their 'left foot, right foot,' as these poor dumb creatures are."

"There is a beautiful carriage with four horses driving by," said Peter, interrupting.

"Then that is the carriage of a noble; they alone are allowed to drive with four horses; merchants and tradesmen can drive only two."

"You forget! When one goes to be married he can drive with four horses," said Mrs. Hamilton.

"O yes, that is amusing; I had forgotten that great privilege, that comes perhaps but once in a lifetime. And at our funeral also, we can ride with four horses."

"We are neither merchants nor tradesmen," said Peter, "and certainly Walter and I shan't be married while we are here. What can we ride with?"

"You can have a rocking-horse, Peter, or ride with papa, when he is willing," said Walter.

"Peter, my dear," said his mother, "*I* understand you; you mean to say, as papa is neither of these, what privileges can he have! He must do as the rest do, only we are foreigners, and are allowed many privileges."

"Yes," said Mr. Hamilton; "and those we care more for than driving with six or eight horses, my boy."

"Did you know that Peter the Great rode in a simple drosky with only two horses, and that since that time all the Emperors, his successors, have followed his example? We should feel

ashamed to have more pride than the Emperor. There is the Emperor; bow, my children!"

The children turned, and saw a kind-looking, handsome man, dressed in black, who had fine blue eyes and brown hair, and who was the generous Emperor, Alexander II., so dearly beloved by the Russians.

Though he is a young man, they love and respect him as a father.

"What a handsome man he is!" said Walter, "and so very kind too! Do you know, if any peasant should ask the Emperor to be godfather to his child, he would certainly consent?"

"The Emperor is known to have many godchildren among the peasantry," said Mr. Hamilton.

"Do they love him as much as we do the President?" asked Peter, simply.

His father laughed. "My dear little fellow," he said, "imagine, for a moment, how much you love your father, and then fancy me so much your superior that you would almost feel it a privilege to dare look upon me."

"It is reverence, Mr. Hamilton, it is not simply love and admiration they have for him," said his wife.

"And is he a *good* man?" asked Peter.

"Yes, my boy, they are all quite right to

revere him, as you cannot understand yet how to respect any one; children cannot reverence rank. If you live in Russia long enough, my boy, you will learn to love the Emperor as we do, who know his virtues."

"O dear!" said Mary, who had been long silent, gazing with open eyes and mouth at the wonderful sights of the city of St. Petersburg, "O dear! papa, there is a man right under the wheels; he will be run over, — I am *sure* he will be run over!"

"Don't be so frightened, Mary; the man knows the law so well that he will not take the trouble to turn out sufficiently," said Mr. Hamilton. "The foot-passenger who is in the way — as if in scorn of the carriage in which he cannot ride — is to be avoided by the driver, and if, through his own carelessness, any accident should occur, the driver is sent to Siberia."

"That is not fair, papa; I would not live in such an unjust country," said Walter.

Mrs. Hamilton smiled, and replied, "Who said, last night, 'Mamma, let us live here always'?"

"Please look at those uniforms!" exclaimed Walter, discreetly changing the subject; "there seems to be a different uniform to be seen on every street."

"You are quite right there, Walter; it is said that half Russia is clad in uniform. In addition to there being so many varieties worn by thousands of soldiers, there are civil uniforms for all the public officers, the police, the professors of the university, and for the teachers and scholars in the public schools."

"Also the servants, papa; you must not forget them!" said Peter; "they have very handsome uniforms; and all the coachmen wear such curious hats and broad sashes round their waists — and black beards — I have noticed that."

Walter laughed, and said he had noticed that too.

"Then they have a civil and an *uncivil* uniform," said Peter.

"No, they call the servants' dress a livery; the servants are remarkably polite; indeed, all the Russians are noted for their courtesy. I hope my little Peter will improve, and lose some of his abruptness, in this polished country."

Peter began to whisper something about ice and polished countries; but nobody heeded him, for they saw suddenly the celebrated equestrian statue of Peter the Great.

"There is the person from whom you take your name, young man; I beg you to follow his example," said Mr. Hamilton. "What a fine

statue it is! how admirably the artist has arranged the support of the horse, in that almost impossible position! Great care was required to preserve the equilibrium. It is the finest equestrian statue in the world."



"See that serpent under the horse's feet; I don't like that," said Walter.

"The serpent is there, not only to indicate how Peter spurned all obstacles, but also to support the horse. A coil of the serpent just reaches the tail of the horse, and is fastened to it, though it hardly appears to touch it. There is another very ingenious arrangement

of the artist. There are ten thousand pounds of iron cast in the tail and hind quarters of the horse, while there is a very trifling weight of bronze in the fore legs. All of which is so beautifully arranged, that you would not know it unless you were told."

"There is a slight disenchantment in knowing it now," said Mrs. Hamilton.

"O no! mamma," said Walter, "I enjoy it more, because it shows how much science is required to construct the statue. It seems so impossible to make a bronze horse and man stand in that position."

"You understand the mechanical construction, my boy, better than you can appreciate the fine action of the horse and the spirited attitude of the rider, or the whole execution of the design," said his father.

"But where could the rock have come from?" asked Peter, whose wonder could not keep him silent any longer.

"This rock, which may have been thrown up in some deluge from the Swedish mountains, was found in the St. Petersburg morass, in a secluded spot, no other rock nor stones within miles of it, which is a remarkable fact."

"How large was it, father?" asked Walter.

"When it was first found, it measured forty-

five feet long, and thirty-five feet high. After they had brought it here, with great trouble and expense,—for it was so large they built a ship and a road for it,—then they made it smaller.”

“Why did they make it smaller, papa?” inquired Peter.

“To form a proper pedestal for the horse; but I suppose sufficient care was not taken, and the rock was split.”

“O, what a pity? And what did they do *then*, papa?”

“Why *then* they joined it together again, and there it is, with a crack through the centre, though I never have detected it myself; so now it is a little artificial, notwithstanding its grandeur.”

“But, my dear,” said Mrs. Hamilton, “they tell me all the granite cracks here, from the extreme frost, and that even the celebrated pillar of Alexander has a rent in it.”

“We must not dare to say that,” answered Mr. Hamilton; “they think it right to deny it; and the flaw—or whatever it may be—has been so neatly cemented, that it could not be observed, unless a stray sunbeam should show the difference in polish between the rent and the pillar. Don’t speak of it!”

“Papa has really become such a patriotic Rus-

sian, that he won't let even us say a word about it," exclaimed Walter, quite amused.

"Please, let us go and examine it now, father!" he said, in delight.

"O, no, not now! — when we go to the Admiralty Place, where the rocking-horses are, and the booths, Peter, for the public amusements in the holidays; there we can see it best through a telescope. Or it looks well from the gateway of the Winter Palace! It is strange to me, why the top of the pillar has been made so very wide and heavy!"

"Yes!" said Mrs. Hamilton, "you cannot see the angel holding the cross, if you should stand just beneath it. It might almost as well not be there."

"My dear, what a mistake that is!" said Mr. Hamilton. "If you should see it from a distance, you would not think so. We'll all go and look at it some day, when we have not had so long a drive. Are you very tired, Peter? You look grave for a little boy."

"No, I'm not tired, papa; but I wanted a bit of that black bread I saw the peasants eating. I only wanted to see *just how it tasted*, whether it was at all like the brown bread we have in America," said Peter.

"Perhaps my little boy means to say, politely,

that he is hungry," said Mr. Hamilton, laughing. "It is really time to go home now, and we'll have another drive and a holiday soon again."

So he spoke to the black-bearded coachman, who did not whip his horses, but communicated with them dexterously by a gentle kick on the foot-board, and they were soon rolling along the wooden pavements toward home.

CHAPTER IV.

ALEXANDER'S COLUMN. — THE ARSENAL.

IF you could see our home you would be surprised. Like many of the houses just outside of the city, it is built of logs, like a Western cabin, and it has but one story. The roofs of the houses here are generally built of iron plates, that are joined together and fastened to the rafters, and which are painted green or red, that gives a lively appearance to the dull landscape. Dull, from the pale, leaden sky, from the light green of the trees, and from the pale sunshine.

One thing astonished me. We had not any well. And every drop of water we drank was brought to the house from the river Neva. To be sure, if you do have a well, the water is so impure that it cannot be drunk, and it makes you ill. The water of the Neva is as pure as crystal. It is an outlet from Lake Ladoga, and as all impurities are deposited in the bottom of the lake, the river in its short course to St. Petersburg does not collect others. And about our washing, — as we have no water, and as we do not

send it to England to be done, as our grand neighbor does, who thinks it is worth the trouble, — we have to send it to the Neva. Even if the river is frozen, there is a hole cut in the ice for the washerwomen, with their troublesome work.

I did not expect to tell you even about our washing-day, though I want you to know everything, even about the baby. He has just fallen asleep on his pillow, for they do not approve of cradles here, or even of carrying the child in your arms; so we hold him on a pillow, and that keeps his head straight. I think the other children are more likely to have their heads turned than the baby, — for there is little Peter asking his mother what she knows about the Column of Alexander, and her not being able to see the figure of a woman, if she stood beneath it.

“What did they have a woman there for?” he inquired.

Mrs. Hamilton did not heed him; the baby was half awake, and she beckoned to Peter to peep at him, just to keep Peter quiet you know. There the two children are looking like a picture.

Peter was too full of fun to keep still long; he peeped at the baby from behind the pillow, and touched his little feet, whispering: “Just like a row of little shells, mother! And look

at his round fist! He 'd like to knock a fellow down if he knew how to do it. And there, see him smile, mother! Do you suppose those little things know enough to dream? I wonder if it still remembers some of the things it saw way up in heaven, where it came from. I don't believe the angels are any prettier than he is. He seems-as if he was listening to music. Now do let him sleep on, and tell me about the Column of Alexander!"

"It is your father, my boy, who knows all about it," she answered.

"But you know too, mamma, because you said you could not see the woman; and what did they have a woman up there on a column for?"

"My dear Peter, you are quite mistaken! I have not said anything about it, that I can recollect. I must be very careful and not be a critic, if I have a little boy who does not exactly remember what I say."

"Will you please tell me something about it?" he answered, meekly.

"Yes! I will tell you about it, if you will repeat what I say correctly to Walter. It was erected in honor of the Emperor Alexander, though his statue is not placed on it, as you think it ought to be."

"What is the woman on it for?" asked Peter again.

"That is meant for an angel, my child, that holds a cross in her hand. It means to show the strength of their religion, which the French, in their attack under Napoleon, could not subdue."

"Don't they call women angels sometimes, mother?"

Mrs. Hamilton was puzzled by the quaint childish question.

"I should be sorry to think so, Peter, for they are very far from it usually."

"My mamma is not very far from it," he answered. For, to every child, his own mother is the highest idea of goodness. Let the mothers remember it.

"Then what did they have an angel there for, mamma?"

"When the Emperor Napoleon attacked Russia, and when Moscow was burnt to prevent the French entering it, then the Russians thought their religion, as well as their country, was attacked. This column, which is made of Turkish cannon, — even the pedestal and ornaments of it, — is meant to perpetuate the victory of Russia over all its enemies, whether they are Turks, French, or any other nation. They are very fond of the Americans, Peter, which is quite pleasant for us!"

"And we Americans like them very well," he answered with dignity.

"But how high did papa say the column was?" he asked, with renewed curiosity.

"It is about eighty feet high."

"What! with the angel and the cross and all; is not it any higher than that. Is that very high?"

"Why, yes, my child; with the angel on the summit, and the pedestal on which it stands, it is one hundred and eighty feet high," said Mrs. Hamilton.

"Are there any other handsome monuments, mamma?"

"Yes; but some other day, when we are driving out, you can hear about them, and see the fine gateways. One is built in honor of the Emperor Alexander, when he returned in triumph from Paris. When he passed through it, it was built of plaster and wood, as all monuments are made at first, and afterwards it was completed, and finished in stone and metal. It has Russian inscriptions on it, but you cannot read even the letters. It has statues of old Russian warriors in niches, and the Goddess of Victory in a car drawn by galloping horses, and she seems to be advancing to meet the Emperor and present a laurel wreath to him. There

is another handsome gateway on the road to Moscow, that we shall see when we go there. This one is on the western side of Russia."

"Of course it would be, because it was built when the Emperor was returning from France, and he would come that way!" said Peter, grandly. "But why do they have that ugly eagle with two heads on everything Russian,—it's so black and cross-looking?" he asked.

"Why do we have the American flag on everything, and the American eagle? It is because it is the symbol of our country,—our coat of arms, we call it."

"But ours is the handsomest! Ours is a *real* eagle, not a two-headed, unnatural thing, like the Austrian and the Russian one."

"Just ask Feodor which he thinks is the handsomest, and he will tell you the eagle with two heads is *twice* as handsome as the one you admire so much. Run and ask him!"

Peter ran off in a hurry, and returned, saying, "I had to get François to ask for me, because I could not make him understand; but Feodor really thinks that horrid old black eagle with two heads, holding a ball and sceptre in his claws, is much more grand and imposing than our fine American eagle. There was one on the United States coin that I showed him. He

laughed, and pointed to the Russian eagle. And then I showed him my American flag, — red, white, and blue; but he thought the Russian one, with the dingy colors was finer still. I shall let him look at my book of stamps, with the flags of all nations in it, and see if he still thinks the Russian flag is the handsomest.”

“And I think the Greek flag is the handsomest, really, Peter!”

“Why, mother! Not handsomer than the red, white, and blue! And while they are losing so many lives to keep that flag! I heard father say so!” he exclaimed, in distress.

“It is for the principles of which the flag is the symbol, my son. Freedom and liberty for all on the soil! It is not for the flag alone.”

“Then perhaps it is not really that old, ugly eagle, with his two heads, that Feodor cares for, but for the principles of the old eagle, — and of the Emperor, who has been freeing the serfs.”

“My dear, little Feodor has not the means of understanding these subjects as well as we do. But the devotion of the Russians to their Emperor is unbounded. Some years ago, when there was a great rebellion and confusion, and a crowd in the streets, one of the Emperors dismounted and walked quietly along; then everything was still, as by magic.”

"I mean to hear what Feodor has to say to my flags, mamma, and then I will come in and tell you."

A little while afterwards, he came running back with Walter, and said, breathlessly, —

"Mamma, what do you think I have seen? Feodor wanted me to go with him to the new Arsenal, — they let us go in, — and what do you think we saw? — besides all the cannon and cannon-balls piled up in great pyramids in the entry! — and Feodor was so proud of the ugly-looking thing!"

"What was it? Really, Walter, you must not let that child run about so, alone."

"I was not alone; no indeed, mamma! Gospodin Peyser took us there, to the Arsenal."

"*Gospodin* Peyser! Please speak English to me, my dear. Say Mr. Peyser."

"I forgot! I will, mamma. Well, Mr. Peyser took us to the new Arsenal, and there was a monstrous great Russian eagle there; and what do you suppose he was made of?"

"How can I guess? Perhaps of feathers."

"No! Guess again."

"Of fur."

"An eagle of fur! No indeed!"

"Well, — of a black bear-skin."

"Is not that fur, mamma? No indeed! — You don't guess well."

"Ask Walter ; perhaps he can tell you."

"No, he never *could* guess, mamma ! It was made entirely of implements of war. Now, you need not laugh at my long words, because you used them yourself, first, you know. Well, the neck and body, and even the legs of the eagle, were made of gun-flints ; the long feathers of its wings were of swords ; the small feathers on its breast were daggers ; every tail-feather was a yataghan ; and his eyes—what were his horrid eyes, do you think ?—the muzzles of two black pistols ; and his throat was the bore of a cannon."

"That was a frightful eagle, indeed ; and enough to warn us, foreigners, to beware of offending the Russian eagle."

"What else did you see there ? Were there other symbols of that kind ?" she inquired.

"O yes ! and all arranged in some fanciful manner," said Walter, "like ornamental flowers or fruit. We counted eight hundred new cannon there."

"And there were other 'implements of war,' " said Peter, "those that belonged to some other countries. Did you see that stuffed cotton armor, belonging to a Chinaman, Walter ? Why, a fellow must look like a stuffed pillow in that armor, and not a bit frightful ! He would be too stout even to run."

"Is that the way *you* would fight, Peter? You say, 'able to run.'"

"No; I said the Chinaman would be too heavy to run; for they are such cowards they are always ready to. And they think other nations are as timid as they are; so they have frightful masks, with fearful-looking faces, to wear in battle, in front of the army."

"Did not they frighten you, then?"

"Frighten me! no indeed! That Japanese Turtle, Walter, was the strangest."

"I did not see any," said Walter. "O yes," he exclaimed, "I know what you mean, now; it was the armor of the Japanese Guards, made of tortoise-shell, joined together in scales. It had a dreadful-looking head like a dragon on it. That was enough to frighten a Chinaman."

"But it would not frighten a nation less timid, mamma. Did any other people fight in that way, by trying to frighten the enemy?"

"The ancients had cats in front of the army."

"O, what a silly way to go to battle!"

"The Persians, under Cambyzes, went to battle with a row of cats in front of the army; and so they invaded Egypt without resistance, because the Egyptians considered these sacred animals."

"What! horrid, unmusical creatures! I did

not suppose such things were known in ancient times. Marcher!" he cried out, "is that where your Russian name came from?"

"What did you call her?" said Walter.

"Why, have you not heard Lena calling out to the baby: 'Etta marcia tam!' (There's the pussy!)"

"I thought she was swearing a little; I am never surprised at anything," said Walter, with dignity.

"O, he is, mamma. Walter was amazed when we saw the different rooms in the new Arsenal, where every Emperor and Empress had a separate apartment devoted to them, and where everything they formerly used was preserved; with the uniforms worn at that time, and the weapons then used in war."

"That must have been worth seeing. Was there a room for Peter the Great?" she asked.

"O yes! Why, we saw a Russian kneeling and crossing himself before a picture of Peter! They ought to worship him."

"I should think they *did*, my dear!" said Mrs. Hamilton, smiling. "What else did they have belonging to Peter?"

"The pike which Peter carried when he went as volunteer in his own army. How grand that was in him!" said Walter.

"I am glad he was promoted," said Peter.

"But even *he* was not promoted till he had earned promotion by his courage," Walter answered. "There is one fine anecdote of Alexander, mamma. In the apartment where Alexander's things are, there are as many as sixty different orders, but there is *one* he would not accept, because he had not deserved it for his great deeds. It is only given for gaining a great victory, or for a series of battles to preserve the country."

"He gained one great victory," said their mother.

"What was that, mamma? They say he refused the order, though the Senate granted it to him."

"The victory over himself!" she answered.

"Well, that is the greatest victory any one *can* gain; but then you know we never have medals for that kind of a victory, and often nobody knows it."

"I think there is some fun in that," said Peter. "How nice it was in Peter the Great, when the shipmaster in Holland ordered him about and scolded him, he did not say, 'I am a great Emperor,' but he went about his work quietly; how he must have laughed to himself! We saw his leather shirt to-day, that he wore when he was in the ship-yard."

"And his uniforms when he was a captain and sergeant," said Walter ; "but I did not see any drummer's uniform."

"But did you see that splendid one belonging to a general who was shot through the heart in a revolt. I cannot remember the long name ; but the Emperor has ordered the uniform of any very distinguished soldier to be preserved in a public place."

"Were there many of them to be seen ?" she asked.

"Many ! O no, mamma, — very few have been preserved ; it is such a very great honor, that there have not been many brave enough to deserve it yet. But I saw something in another room I thought worth seeing. It was the silver shields belonging to the Turks, and the flags of different nations."

"I did not see those," said Walter ; "I was looking at the keys of the fortresses taken by the Russians. They were Turkish and Persian, and some others ; and near every bunch of keys there was a picture of the city surrendered."

"That was very interesting," said their mother.

"Mamma, father told us the Russians have most accurate models of their fortresses in wood, and descriptions of the Dardanelles, and of all the fortifications they own ; and that if anything

should ever require it to be done, the Emperor could stay at home, and give directions to his people how to carry on a war, and what place was to be attacked first, and what would be impregnable."

"That is more alarming than the two-headed Russian eagle you told me about. How little we have known of this nation, and how powerful and accomplished it is!"

"And in another room," said Peter, "we saw the war-horse of the Empress Catherine, that had been stuffed; and there it stood, all saddled and bridled, — but it was not a side-saddle, mamma."

"Catherine was a great general, my son, and I suppose she wished to appear like one, even on horseback. I think a statue would be in better taste than a stuffed horse."

"Did not I mention the statue, mamma? There was a statue there, too, on a throne, with all the emblems of — what was it Gospodin said, Walter?"

"With all the emblems of imperial power," Walter answered, with dignity.

"O, yes! the emblems of imperial power," Peter repeated.

"It is a very strange thing to have the horse stuffed, and preserved as a curiosity. And not even a side-saddle on him, to look

womanly, and to show it belonged to her. It is all very strange to me, and the customs of the country are very perplexing," said Mrs. Hamilton, with a sigh.

But the boys ran out to see more wonders, and the baby awoke with a little cry. And you never saw a real Russian baby! He looks just as you did once, and eats and laughs and sleeps and cries just as you do now, — only you hoped I did not know about the crying!

CHAPTER V.

CRONSTADT.

"O MAMMA, mamma, here is a blind harper at the window! I have read of them in my story-books, but I never saw one before. Peter, come and see him," exclaimed Mary.

Peter hastened to the window, and ran out to speak to him, in his language of mixed Russ and English; for children are never afraid to talk; if they do not know the language spoken, they will make one of their own, till they are understood.

"Where did you come from?" asked Peter, civilly.

The blind man heard him, and shook his head, saying:

"Ne penni mi!"

"What is that? he wants a penny, Mary," said Mrs. Hamilton.

"O no, mamma! that means he does not understand what Peter says. Why can't he speak in Russ to him?" she added, in vexation at Peter's want of thought.



“Ask him to come here, Peter; I want to see him,” she said.

“Ask him yourself, if you can,” said Peter, sullenly.

“Padyum te, Gospodin,” Mary said, smilingly. The blind man heard and understood the request, and came slowly towards the window.

"Why don't you ask him to play, Mary, if you can talk so much? and why did you say 'Gospodin' to an old beggar?" said Peter, roughly.

"O Peter, don't! what if he should understand you!" she said, in distress.

"What is the matter, my children?" said Mrs. Hamilton, not understanding the discussion, and wondering, in her bewilderment, whether the harper or the Russ was the cause of the trouble.

"Mary is calling the old beggar a gentleman, mamma," answered Peter, proudly.

"I did not hear anything of the kind, my dear, and if she did, it was very polite in little Mary."

"I only said 'Gospodin,' mamma. I did not like to say, 'Come here, *you*,' because he was blind, and we ought to be very good to him, for God takes care of him. Nurse says he takes care of all who cannot take care of themselves."

"Nurse gives you wise instruction, little one; will you give the harper something to eat?" her mother replied, kindly.

"O yes, mamma; and just listen! he is playing 'Home, sweet home,'—only think of their knowing that, 'way out here!'"

“ Ah ! that is prettier than the strange Russian music they have in the churches ; that is so monotonous,” said Mrs. Hamilton, “ that I cannot learn to like it.”

“ Only boys sing in the churches,” said Peter ; “ that is amusing ; I should like that fun ! ”

“ You very naughty boy, Peter,” exclaimed Mary.

“ You must speak Russ and learn Latin first,” said his mother, gravely.

Peter, knowing that was a requisite of which he had not thought before, gave up his idea of learning to chant ; and led the old harper away to find some refreshment among the servants, where he could be understood. Even among the servants you will find French, Russians, Germans, or Swedes, and these different languages spoken ; for servants travelling with their masters acquire a foreign tongue with great facility. Our best interpreter was an Irishman, and without him we should have been in sad perplexity at times, when James was absent on business.

Peter soon came running back with a letter that François had brought ; and the children sat down to hear it read aloud. Shall we look over their shoulder and read it ? It is not rude to do that in a book. It was from James, — from Mr. Hamilton, as we call him now, — and it be-

gan in this way, after leaving out the date and a few words you would not care for.

"My dear Wife and Children, — When Jerry and I were invited by the American Vice-Consul to visit Cronstadt, we started on this fine winter morning, driving three horses abreast in a comfortable caleche over the ice of the Neva. We had hardly left the village when our driver ran over or knocked down an old woman. He became quite excited, as the punishment is very severe; not unfrequently sending the unfortunate driver to Siberia."

"Is that a dreadful place?" asked Mary, interrupting the reading of the letter.

"O no," said Walter; "they have shops and everything nice there; there are good towns, and people work at their trades and grow rich."

"But they can't come back here; it is better to have your liberty than it is to grow rich and have to stay away from home," replied Peter.

"It is the separation from our friends that is the painful part of it," said Mrs. Hamilton; "and they forget us after being away so long. Poor Mrs. — saved enough money to go to her husband, who had been sent to Siberia, and when she arrived she found him quite rich and happy, and married to some one he met there, and that she was forgotten entirely. So she came home again."

"Is that true, mamma?"

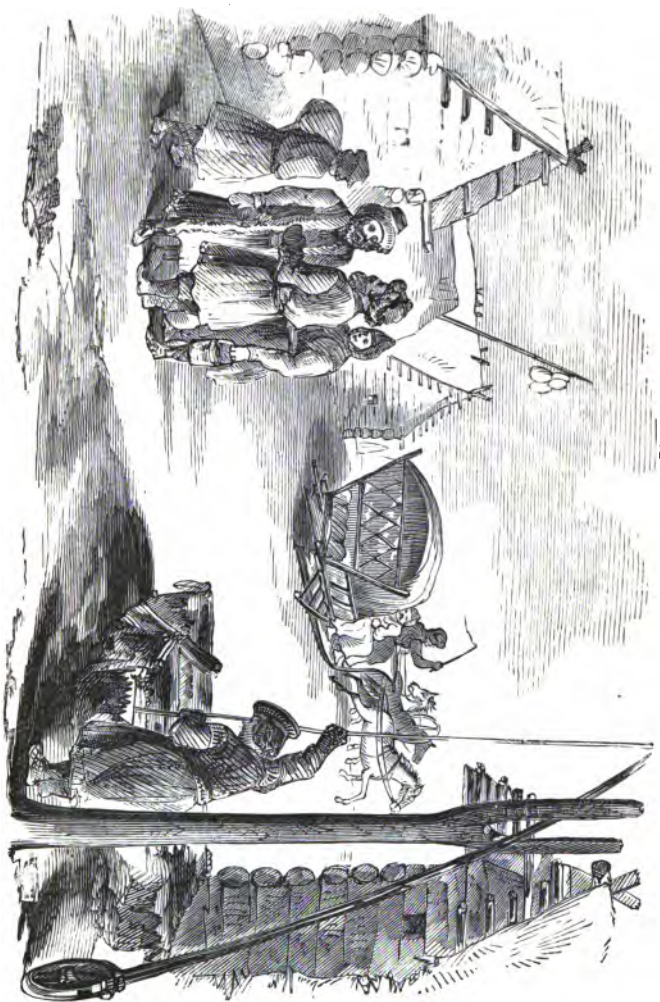
"Quite true," she replied.

"Let us hope none of us will be sent there," said Peter.

"There is no fear of that," said Walter; "they would not notice us enough. What else did papa write?"

"If you will not attend, I cannot read to you," said his mother. "Your father says, it is surprising so few accidents occur, as they never use blinders or bells here, but that the drivers are very expert, dashing along at 'top speed.' To use his own words,—

"No sooner had we cleared the suburbs, than it began to snow, and if it had not been for the ringing of a bell occasionally, from the different stands for the guidance of travellers in keeping the road, and for the fir-trees which were placed there, and lined the way, we should have lost it entirely, for it continued to snow 'faster and faster.' Our driver, however, who is an old stager, in about one hour arrived at the half-way house on the Neva. The hotel is built of wood upon the ice, and is about midway between Cronstadt and the city; it is well kept, well warmed, and tolerably well patronized; and where refreshment for man and beast is to be had; and is very well for a *floating* hotel and population.





"Our driver, having partaken of his glass of schnaps and a piece of black bread, and we, having made ourselves comfortable over the fire, again started, and arrived in safety in about two hours after leaving St. Petersburg, a distance of some seventeen miles. Our driver told us that wolves were not unfrequently seen crossing the ice from shore to shore, but we saw none."

"I hope not!" whispered little Mary, with a shiver.

"We entered the Mole of Cronstadt," Mrs. Hamilton continued, without heeding the interruption, "by the same entrance which admits merchant-ships at any time of tide. It is capable of holding one thousand vessels, and adjoins the Admiralty Mole, or Naval Depot, where the Russian men-of-war mostly winter."

"I am glad he told us what kind of a mole it was," said Peter. "*I did not know.*"

"Our host received us very kindly," read Mrs. Hamilton, not listening to Peter, "and after viewing the town, 'a deserted village' in winter, but a perfect beehive in summer, we were called to dinner, which was well served, and to which ample justice was done. The Emperor's health being drunk, and the double-headed eagle toasted,—as well as the eagle with one head,—Jerry remarked that he hoped, in

the eagle's annual flight to Boston, that he would *feather the nest* of his Uncle Robert, who is a Russian merchant." Here Mrs. Hamilton smiled, but the children looked puzzled; and she read on: "I replied, that formerly eighty American vessels had entered Cronstadt in a single season, but now the number is reduced to twenty, or even less.

"On recrossing the ice of the Mole, on our return, we discovered that, in order to preserve the ships from injury, the ice around them is daily cut and removed. So that water flows between the ship and the thick ice, while she is held fast by the stem and stern-post only. Cronstadt is the seaport or port of entry and of export. Here all vessels drawing over nine feet of water discharge their cargoes into lighters, which are sent to the St. Petersburg custom-house, though previously an entry is made, on arrival of the ship and her cargo at Cronstadt, and all outward cargoes are sent down to Cronstadt from St. Petersburg by lighters. However, vessels drawing less than nine feet of water are enabled to cross the bar, which is six miles from St. Petersburg, and proceed with their cargoes, inward or outward, to and from the city.

"Cronstadt, from her immense and formidable fortresses, may be called the Gibraltar of the

North. These fortresses are built of solid blocks of granite, of prodigious strength and durability. During the late war between Russia and England, the combined fleets of England and France left the English Channel to test the strength of Cronstadt; and Admiral Napier said, on the Queen's visit to the fleet, just before it sailed for the Baltic, that he should breakfast at Cronstadt and dine at St. Petersburg on the same day."

"And did he do it?" asked Peter, eagerly.

"No. And Lord Clarendon said, 'No man is answerable for after-dinner speeches,' and so it proved; for after inspecting the formidable array of these impregnable works, the fleet never approached nearer than five miles for two successive seasons of threatened attack.

"The English made themselves quite merry, some years since, over Admiral Howe, for his unsuccessful cruise after the French fleet, saying, 'Lord Howe he goes out, Lord Howe he comes in'; and now they are laughing at Napier, who sailed up the Baltic and — sailed down again."

"Is that all he says, mamma? Does he not say that he is coming home?" asked Walter, gravely.

"No, my dear, you know papa never writes about himself."

"He might at least say that he is well," said

Peter, a little vexed at the long, serious letter inflicted on him, when he hoped to have something amusing from papa.

"He writes just like a book," said Mary, innocently.

"Yes; we might read it in any book," said Peter. "I don't like such letters."

"Very well, my dears; if your father takes the trouble to write all this information for you, and you do not care about hearing it, I can tell him not to send any more letters to you."

"O no, mamma, don't tell him! we do like to hear them!"

I did not blame the children, for James might have made his journey more amusing; not that he could help there being no incidents beyond his taking up the old woman and carrying her on the sledge, (which he told us on his return,) but he need not have said so much about the fortresses and the Mole; he must have known you children would not like it.

"There is still another strange-looking man coming to the house to-day," said Mrs. Hamilton, looking up from reading her letter; "there must be some reason for their flocking here; there must be something going on, some new custom of the country," she said, doubtfully. "Peter, you had better go and see what it means. I wish your father was here!"



Peter returned, in high spirits. "It is only a travelling glazier, mamma!" he said; "he wants to know if we have any broken windows."

"Now, Peter, did you understand him? There could be no reason for his wanting to know whether our windows were broken, (unless he wants to enter one,)" she thought to herself. "What is that ladder on his back?" she asked.

"That is where he carries the glass, madam," said a servant, entering; "he came here to attend the Palm-Sunday Fair, and wishes to

know if you require his services at the house, first."

"Certainly not," she said, dismissing the servant. "We should be frozen in our beds if we had broken windows at this time of year! I do wish they would have anything like home! Here are travelling mechanics seen with a pack on their back, like a vagabond, and in America the same man would be driving out in a chaise, one of our respectable citizens."

"It is the custom, mamma," said Peter; "they bring everything to the house, or sell things in the street."

"That must be owing partly to the floating population; it must be to accommodate the people, who are always coming to the city."

"What are they floating on?" said Mary.

"Hush, Mary; it is because the city is built over the water," said Peter, patronizingly.

"You are both wrong," said their mother. "The floating population means the changing of the inhabitants, who are mostly foreigners, and who come here for a few years, and are succeeded by others, who take their places as citizens of St. Petersburg."

"Then I am floating," said Mary, jumping around the room; "I don't mean to stay here many years."

"They say the Louse Market is for the accommodation of foreigners," said Peter.

"My dear!" said Mrs. Hamilton, gravely.

"Why, mamma, I thought you would not want me to speak Russ, and say 'Voshevoi ruinok' to you. There are two immense markets, and nearly five thousand booths and stalls, where you can buy everything."

"Everything, Peter? Be reasonable, my son."

"Yes, everything, mamma. Mr. Peyser said that a North American Indian or a Russian peasant-bride could be dressed from top to toe there, and well dressed too!"

"I should like to see this wonderful place."

"O no, mamma! it is not a nice place for you; it is so full of Jews and foreigners, and some of the aisles between the booths are so dark and dismal!"

"How came you there, Peter?"

"Walter and I went to see the place. There is everything to be seen there. There are fruit-shops, and booths with perfumery, and for graven images, and for artificial flowers. But what we liked best were the wooden booths with open fronts, where birds were sold. There were swans, larks, bulfinches, and singing birds of all kinds."

"Why did not you bring some home?" asked Mary.

"How could I? There were tame pigeons there; the pigeon is called a sacred bird, and is so tame that you can catch it in your hand."

"Why is it sacred?" asked Mary.

"I can't tell," said Peter; "it is enough to know *that*, is not it?"

"It is because the Holy Ghost took the form of a dove," said Mrs. Hamilton, "and so the Russians never eat it, and always take care of it, and cherish it as sacred."

"What queer people they are!" said Peter. "Are they so very good?"

"We cannot judge of that," said his mother. "You may take Mary to walk with François, and be sure that you do not go to the —— market with the long name!"

"The 'Voshevoi ruinok,' mamma."

"Very well; you know what I mean. What shall I do with that boy, he is learning to talk so fast?"

Peter looked in at the door, laughing again, and said, "Mamma, I will tell you what to do with him! Let him go to the Palm-Sunday Fair!"

"Do you want to go to a fair on Sunday, Peter?"

"Why, mamma, it is on three days of the week before Palm Sunday, and on Saturday

there will be a great procession. May we go to see it, Mary and I, with François?"

"Yes, you may go, if you will promise to be very good and quiet. And, Peter, you must tell Walter about it, and ask him to go, too."

"Yes, mamma, but I know Walter will not wish to go."

It was true. Walter would not go; he was too busy poring over his Ancient History, and the size of Xerxes' army, to care about such child's play as the Palm-Sunday Fair. Was he not foolish? For History only tells us of things that are past and gone, and we can learn so much by looking around, and seeing things that happen now; and these very things will be history to the boys that live after us, and as interesting as the war of the Revolution to you.

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"How could I? There were there; the pigeon is called a sacred so tame that you can catch it in your hand."

"Why is it sacred?" asked Maria.

"I can't tell," said Peter; "it is not *that*, is not it?"

"It is because the Holy Ghost is in the shape of a dove," said Mrs. Hamilton, "and the Russians never eat it, and always take care to and cherish it as sacred."

"What queer people they are!"

"Are they so very good?"

"We cannot judge of that," said Peter; "You may take Mary to walk with her, and be sure that you do not go to the market with the long name!"

"The 'Voshevoi ruinok,' mamma."

"Very well; you know what I mean. Shall I do with that boy, he is learning to fast?"

Peter looked in at the door, laughed, and said, "Mamma, I will tell you about it with him! Let him go to the Palm Fair!"

"Do you want to go to a fair, Maria?" asked Peter.

"Why, mamma, it is on three or four weeks before Palm Sunday, and on

twigs with silver leaves, and with little
 golds fastened to them with blue ribbons.
 At the Palm-Sunday Fair these beautiful
 things are sold, and so many lovely things
 I cannot describe half of them to you.
 Could I make you believe them if I did?
 The twigs are brought into the city by the
 country, and then they are ornamented to suit



By. A great number of natural flowers
 brought from the hot-houses of St. Peters-
 burg, violets, and orange-flowers, for the

CHAPTER VI.

PALM-SUNDAY FAIR. — THE NAVY.

PALM-SUNDAY Fair is to the little Russians what the Christmas holiday is to the children here. They expect beautiful gifts, and they receive them, too. The cook makes fanciful cakes and sugar images. The coachman and the lackey make boxes of wood or paper; the friends of the family send in lovely palm-branches, where the leaves are of gold or filigree. For this is the Palm-Sunday Festival, that even the Emperor and his children attend.

On Saturday there is a great procession, to represent the entrance of Christ into Jerusalem; then the people go into the churches carrying palm-branches, and singing. The priests sprinkle the branches and the people with holy water, and give them a blessing. Then they all go home, and carry their branches with them, and keep them as precious as gold. And they are often made of gold, with beautiful fruits imitated in wax, that are filled with costly trinkets; or of

bare twigs with silver leaves, and with little angels fastened to them with blue ribbons.

At the Palm-Sunday Fair these beautiful branches are sold, and so many lovely things that I cannot describe half of them to you. How could I make you believe them if I did? These twigs are brought into the city by the peasantry, and then they are ornamented to suit



the fancy. A great number of natural flowers are brought from the hot-houses of St. Petersburg, roses violets, and orange-flowers, for the

young girls, who would not feel pleased with artificial ones. But as for the boys, they have much fun and frolic by flogging each other with the twigs, which they do most vigorously.

It is the custom in Russia to flog every one with these branches who sleeps late on Palm-Sunday morning; and Walter was roused by Peter, calling in his ear and swinging the branch in triumph over him, singing a little Russian song, which you could not understand if I gave it to you.

Walter was indignant at being roused in this way, and at the whipping he received.

"What do you mean, you sir?" he cried out.

"It is the custom of the country," said Peter.

"It is only the custom of the country; don't be frightened."

"I'll frighten *you*!" he said; and if Mrs. Hamilton had not entered the room, we don't know what might have happened.

"It is only the custom of the country, my dear boy," she said, so gently, and smiled so oddly at Walter's anger, that he had to laugh himself at the undignified position in which he was placed.

"Your father returned last night, my dear boys, and he means to take us to see the Winter Palace and the crown-jewels, where the bouquets are

made of precious stones, the roses of rubies, and the green leaves of emeralds."

"That will be worth seeing," said Walter; "not those nonsensical palm-branches with silver angels tied on with blue ribbons, and the gold and silver leaves!" he exclaimed, in contempt.

"They are beautiful, my dear; and if you only felt the same religious fervor which animates the Russians, you would respect their remembrance of the day."

"I don't mind their caring for the day; but the gold and silver branches are so different from all the Saviour's teachings; the simple life he led, and the simple palm-branch he carried in his hand, are not typified by these showy branches."

"These are symbols, my son, and it only shows their love for his memory. You are too young to be so severe!"

"But I am not too young to think. I must look about, and have some knowledge of the customs. There is so much that is different from home, especially in the religious rites."

"O dear! I hope the boy won't have his religion changed," she thought, "as well as his manners and his language. But why should I fear? There is the same God over us here, though the sky is so dark and the night comes on at noonday!"

"Come in to breakfast, my boy, and see your father," she said, leaving the room.

Walter hurried down to see his father and ask him about Cronstadt; there were some questions that his mother could not answer about the letter.

"Father! Orloff tells me that Cronstadt is built on Kettle Island," he said, after bidding his father good morning.

"You are in a hurry, Walter, to hear about it," he said, "and you were late at breakfast this morning, I believe," alluding mischievously to the whipping.

"It is no matter now, sir; I did not understand it at first," he said; "I am more interested in the history of the country than I am in these foolish customs."

If Walter had not had a whipping, he would not have thought the custom so silly, we think.

"You asked me about the island on which Cronstadt is built. It is really named Kettle Island, to celebrate the victory of Péter the Great, who drove off the Swedes from it in such haste that they left their great camp-kettle behind them, which the Russians raised on a pole as a trophy, and named the island, ever after, Kettle Island. That was in 1703."

"What made Peter first think of having a fleet, father?"

“There was a small English sloop discovered at Ismailof, which was repaired by a Dutchman named Brand, who was Peter’s particular friend. In this sloop Peter sailed up and down the small river Yausa. In summer this river is nearly dry, and so the sloop was taken to a lake, where Peter learned to steer and set sail, and to manage his vessel in head-winds. He was so pleased at this that he determined, in 1694, to have a Russian fleet; two yachts were built by the Dutchman, who was the admiral of this fleet, and the Emperor was the pilot. They had two small cannon, hardly loud enough to be heard across the lake. But the little fleet made its way to the large lake of Peipus, and engagements took place there between the Swedes and Russians, and the first flag taken from the Swedes, which was on Lake Ladoga, was carried to Moscow and placed in the Kremlin in 1702. In 1719 he had a good fleet.”

“Had the Swedes and the Russians been enemies before this?”

“Yes! For centuries the Swedes had kept possession of the coast; but Peter conquered them, and went back in triumph, and then promoted himself to the rank of vice-admiral.”

“Did not the other Emperors care so much about the navy as Peter did?”

“No one, since Peter, has done so much as Nicholas has for the Russian navy.”

"Does the Empress care for it?"

"Not this Empress; but the Empress Catherine II. sent ships to the Levant to protect the Russian interests there, and formed a fleet in the Black Sea."

"How many ships have they now, papa? I don't care about what they had once, and they say Catherine's vessels were not so good as those of Nicholas; they were so clumsy the English laughed at them," said Walter; "but they did not fight them."

"Where did you hear that?"

"I did hear so! Papa, how many vessels are there now in the Russian navy?"

"I can only tell you what I have learned about it. That the Russian navy consists of 350 ships of war, carrying nearly 6,000 cannon and manned by 50,000 men. There are 120 gunboats, chiefly for the protection of the coast of Finland. There are 40 ships of the line, of from 60 to 120 guns, and 35 frigates."

"Do they keep them all near Cronstadt?"

"It is said there are nearly two thousand cannon on the Black Sea in Russian ships of war. One, the largest in the Russian navy, carries 120 guns. But there is a fine fleet on the Baltic belonging to the Russians, which in force and in size is twice as great as that of any other nation there."

"What is it *for*, father?" asked Peter.

"There is the old question, Mr. Hamilton, if you can answer it," said Mrs. Hamilton, smiling.

"Well, Peter, Russia certainly has very few colonies to visit, except in North America, and some in China; nor commerce to protect, nor wars to fight; so we must believe they are for future need. The vessels wear out very fast, owing to the fresh water at Cronstadt."

"And, papa, that cutting out of the ice you told us about; *that* was dangerous," said Walter. "That does not injure the vessel, I suppose. Where are they built? At Cronstadt?" he asked.

"No; they are built here and at Archangel. I mean the hulls of the vessels are; and then they are carried down to Cronstadt on 'camels,' to float them over the bar."

"What big ones they must be!" said Peter.

"What are they, really, father?" asked Walter.

"They are something in appearance like a monstrous chest, with an opening in the side, large enough to admit the hull of a ship of the line; it only draws nine feet of water. This floats into the Admiralty dock-yard, and is filled with water till it sinks deep enough for the vessel's hull to float into it. Then the water is pumped

out again, and the 'camel' and its strange freight float down over the bar, where it is too shallow for a ship, to Cronstadt."

"Does it go without sails or rigging?"

"Yes, it goes to Cronstadt for that. A large vessel cannot float over the bar, for it draws twenty feet of water, and the camel only requires nine."

"How can it sail without sails and masts?" asked Peter.

"What ingenious boys you are for finding questions! It is towed down to Cronstadt by steamer. Is that enough for you to know?" he answered.

"Yes, sir; until we go to the Winter Palace."

"I hope that will be to-morrow, my dear, the boys have been looking forward to it so long," said Mrs. Hamilton.

"I am sorry they will be obliged to wait; I had to be absent during Butter Week, and now the Easter ceremonies will keep us occupied."

"I did not see any more butter than we always have!" said Peter, in a frolic, as usual.

"Have not you been fasting, Peter? Before the Easter Fast we have everything cooked in butter, and during the fast we eat nothing but oil."

"Father says *we* eat, as if he meant to be a

real Russian. I shall never learn to eat oil instead of solid food. I shall never starve," replied Peter.

"That is very true, my dear," said his mother; "you certainly will not fast willingly."

"Ah, Peter! your mother is laughing at you. I see, you are the little fellow who wanted black bread the first day we went to ride. Do you like it now?"

"I like anything, when I am hungry," he answered.

"That is sensible. We will leave the navy now, and see what is going on outside of our windows."

They heard a slight noise, and baby said, "Cheep chick," which he meant for "bird"; there was certainly music of some kind, but what could it be, at this time, on Sunday?

What do you think they saw from the window? It was a dancing bear, that clumsily leaped, or rather shuffled his heavy feet about, as if it were meant for dancing to the sound of an organ.

"Here, Mary, come and learn to dance!" cried Peter. "Here is the Russian style of dancing. I think the horses waltz better than the bears do. The horses dance in quadrilles, sometimes."

"What dreadful long stories you tell me, Pe-

ter. Do they, really? I like to see the bear dance. What a long pole he has to hold!"

"Don't laugh at him, Mary, he might not like it."

The bear showed his teeth, in return, as Mary laughed; and she suddenly retreated, thinking of the old story of the bears who destroyed the mocking children on Sunday.

"Don't be frightened; we don't have bears now to frighten children," said Peter.

"They are very common in Russia, Peter, and sometimes come very near the city. But Mary is too good to be frightened so easily. We shall not let anything harm her. Look up and laugh, Mary!" said her father.

Mary ventured timidly to peep at the bear again, and we shall leave them both laughing, — the child and the bear.

CHAPTER VII.

EASTER EVE.

"MAMMA, it is Easter Eve; shall we go with the Peysers to see the ceremonies at the church? Papa is quite willing, if you will allow us to go," said Walter, the next day.

"Is your father going with you?"

"O yes; he says he should like to see the ceremonies very much," the children answered, in great fear that their request should not be granted.

"Walter may go; but do you think Peter better go, Mr. Hamilton? Mary fortunately fell asleep many hours since."

"O yes, let Peter go, papa! Peter will never forget it as long as he lives," said Walter.

"That is very true; he may never see the ceremony again in his life, and I hope it will do him good. It may soften the child into a little seriousness," said Mr. Hamilton.

"You will take very good care of him; and if he should fall asleep, be sure to cover him up, so that he does not take cold," said the anxious mother.

“Does mamma suppose I am going to a great show like that, to fall asleep?” asked Peter, in indignation. “If I was a little boy, it would be a different thing; but have not I travelled across the water, and been in a steam-ship, and can’t I keep awake?”

“We shall see, Peter, how much you will remember to tell your cousins when you return to America.”

“I shall have enough to tell them; for they only know what time the moon comes up out of the sea, and whether the white-pine needles or the black ones are the thickest; and they like to strew grass-seed into the pine-cones and see it grow there, and to make down-balls out of thistles, and all such silly things! What will they think of the Easter eggs, and of the swings we have here, where men and women fly up in the air in boxes? They only have old grape-vines to swing in, or a hay-rope tied on a beam in the barn, for a rainy day!”

“That is a long discourse, Peter; and how will your cousins feel at your ridiculing the sports you enjoyed so much last summer?”

“They seem stupid to me now, mamma.”

“I hope you will not like Russia so well that you will forget home, Peter,” said his mother.

“It is only the novelty, my dear,” said Mr.

Hamilton. "He will be glad enough to get home again. Come, Peter, it is time for us to go ; and if your mother prefers to stay at home, we shall feel sorry, but must try to get along without her."

"What will they do there ? There is so much ceremony ; I do not exactly like to see it."

"In the first place," said Mr. Hamilton, "the court appears in full dress in the imperial chapel. The priests begin a mass, but at midnight the doors are opened to the interior sanctuary of the church ; the chandeliers are lighted ; the congregation hold lighted tapers in their hands ; the song breaks forth, ' Christohs vosskress,' — Christ has risen ; at the same moment two priests remove the pall from a box on trestles, — to represent a coffin, — standing in the church, and which was placed there Good Friday, since when people have been going in and out, with much real devotion, to kiss the Saviour's wounds, whose body it represents."

"These poor peasants seem to have much religion," said Mrs. Hamilton.

"Then the most singular part of the ceremony to us," said Mr. Hamilton, "is the kissing after this. The bishop gives a kiss and a blessing to all who approach him, saying, ' Christohs vosskress.' "

“And the congregation, too, mamma, kiss each other; every one kisses his friends and acquaintance, even those whom they know but little,” said Walter.

“And the priests walk through the church, swinging censers, and singing the same joyful words, ‘Christohs vosskress.’”

“Mamma,” said little Peter, “they say the colonel of a regiment kisses all his officers, and even some of the soldiers; that a captain kisses his men, and everybody kisses his friends.”

“And I shall kiss my little boy, if he is good.”

Peter laughed, — he thought that would be no novelty.

But Mr. Hamilton said, “If you should see any rockets, or hear a sound of cannon-firing, you must not be alarmed, because that is to be expected to-night, and you will like to look out at the illumination. All the churches will be lighted, inside and out, at once, and the bells will be rung. It is well worth seeing for the boys, and I have never seen it myself, yet.”

“Mamma,” said Walter, impressively, “Dunia says the poor people carry their Easter breakfasts to church to be blessed, and that they are ranged along the aisles of the churches, and even on the outside of them when the aisles are full. They carry red eggs and pots of honey, and bread and

cakes ; and if one is late with his breakfast, and comes hurrying in, the priest waits kindly till he unties his napkin and displays the food to be blessed, then he blesses it and passes on."

"It is only the poor who have their food blessed," said Peter. "I remember my Sunday-school lesson at home, that begins, 'Blessed are the poor—' I don't remember the rest of it. Why is that, mamma?"

Mamma smiled on Peter, for the thought suggested by the child was, that the simple food of the poor was more blessed than the rich man's feast.

"The rich man has his food consecrated at home, my dear, and he has not, usually, so much belief in the importance of this ceremony," she replied.

"What is the reason, mother?"

"Come, Peter, your mother cannot answer that any better than she could answer why a child has more faith than a man ; or why a bird sings in a storm, or a flower blushes in the sun. Don't forget to look at the illumination ! Good night !"

So they went out ; leaving Mrs. Hamilton, who sat at the window and looked into the street below. Through the day the monks had been seen walking slowly by towards the churches,

whose domes were shining in the sun, surmounted by a cross. These monks, unlike those at Rome, wear long, flowing hair, sometimes braided to wave in curling masses over their shoulders. If we could fancy we should be believed, we might say the monks were vain of those beautiful shining locks, so well brushed and curled. The booths in the streets were frequented by pedestrians, who stopped, as they were passing, to purchase some small article or to take some refreshment, to which they are cordially invited by the seller. These travelling-booths or restaurants are very convenient, and certainly are very well patronized.

The long, fur-lined coats of the men, almost reaching to their heels, and their clumsy caps, are so much like a disguise, that we can hardly tell them from the women who are buying articles at the shop, on the corner of the street. The icicles on the roofs, and the heavy garments worn by the people, warn us of the still, cold night coming on, — night that is so cold that the watchman freezes at his post. There will be fires built in the street, before the theatres, for the coachmen and the police, and for the poor, who suffer less from cold here than they do in America. If we knew people were freezing to death, then we should have great fires at the corners of the

streets, and give sheepskin coats to the poor, as they do in Russia. The police and the watchmen have fur-lined coats, with fur collars, presented to them by the government, when winter approaches.

As Mrs. Hamilton looked out, the Boudoschnik, or watchman, was beneath the window, where he paces all through the night, occasionally calling out, "Kmo udeins?" (as you cannot read Russ, I will pronounce it for you, — "Ktau eedjot?") which only means, "Who goes there?"



He is in his winter dress, and we were so accustomed to seeing him there, that I hardly believe we should feel quite safe without him. Every house near us had its own watchman. How should you like that? It is because fires

are so common here ; owing to the houses being so heated, and many of them of wood. Now they are going to make St. Petersburg a city of stone houses, and many have been recently built. There is also danger from water, that overflows the city sometimes, owing to its situation on the sea-coast, and its being built on a treacherous marsh. So we are glad to have a watchman of our own.

But we never see any beggars in the street ; they are not allowed to enter the city ; but in summer, if you ride out into the country, they are sitting by the way-side, with the lily of the valley growing wild all around them. These must be the lilies of the field that the Saviour speaks of ; — not the beggars, — though they toil not, neither do they spin, *nor even beg*, but silently cross themselves as we go by, and are grateful for even a kopeck.

On Easter Eve, the monks and all the people in the churches hold torches in their hands, to be lighted all at the same moment, when the priests enter the churches from the inner sanctuary. Suddenly the illumination flashed before our eyes, — the rockets went up from the still street below, — little Mary roused from her sleep as the cannon boomed, and then started up, frightened, crying out, — “ Where am I, mamma ? What is it ? Is it not night ? ”



“Yes, my child ; it is Easter Eve. You must try to go to sleep again.”

“But I cannot sleep, mamma. I must look out, and see how beautiful the illumination is. See the domes of St. Isaac’s, glittering with pure gold ! And the blue domes of the Smolnoi Convent in the distance, that are shining like the sky, because the silver stars on them look like the stars in heaven. And look at the gold needle at the fortress !”

“I do not know what you mean, Mary.”

“We children all called it the needle, when

we first came ; it looks so exactly like a long gold needle ; it is the gilt spire of the Peter and Paul Church in the fortress, father says. It shines to-night brighter than ever. How much gold there must be in it ! ”

“ It looks like a golden mast, I think,” said Mrs. Hamilton. “ It is three hundred and forty feet high, and as slender as a pine-tree.”

“ I wish I could be in the pine woods at home, mamma ; or else in the Emperor’s palace,” she said, correcting herself. When you wish, it is well to wish for the best, as wishing does not help you. “ The Emperor’s children can eat out of gold and silver plates and cups. Walter says he saw real gold covers with emerald knobs for their soup-tureens. What kind of soup could they have to eat, mamma, when the covers of the dishes are made of gold, and the letters of the name are marked in diamonds ? How I wish I was an emperor’s daughter ! ”

“ Would you leave me, Mary ? ”

“ O no ! But if I was the daughter of an emperor, then you would be an empress, you know.”

“ That is good reasoning, Mary. Shall I tell you a story about a little girl who was the daughter of a queen ? ”

“ Was she just such a little girl as I am ? Don’t

the children of an empress or a queen look different from other children? Don't they have golden hair, or porcelain teeth, or anything else strange about them."

"Why, Mary, you do know better than that!"

"Well, mamma, we had a story book, and in it the children all had golden hair and porcelain teeth."

"Don't you mean ivory teeth, Mary?"

"Yes, mamma, that is the same thing. And I thought it was because it was the queen's daughter who was described. Why should they have so much gold and silver and precious stones, if they are just exactly like other children? I should think the gold would cling to them, as it did to King Midas's little daughter, in my book, who turned all yellow, and became a gold image."

"What nonsense, Mary!" said her mother, laughing.

"Well, I should like to try it!" said Mary. "I should not be afraid. I should like to be the queen's daughter only one day, just to see how it seems."

"And leave me and the baby?"

"I should not like to leave the baby long, mamma, because he grows so fast, and changes so, he would forget me soon. But as for you, mamma —"

“ Well, my dear ! ”

“ As for you — why ! — I think *you 'd keep !* ”

At this exhibition of touching, childish affection, Mrs. Hamilton thought she would tell Mary a little story, which you may read, and you will see that all children are alike ; whether it is the poor child, who is a beggar, or the rich one, who does not know what it wants.

THE PRINCESS WHO NEVER LAUGHED.

FROM THE GERMAN.

Princess Hulda was the prettiest child in the world, and so strong and well, that she never had a finger ache in her life.

She lived with her parents in a great large castle, where everything was full of magnificence and splendor. The walls of the chambers were covered with mirrors in which Hulda could see herself reflected a thousand times. The floor was studded with ducats, and lovely figures of gold and silver stood on the marble tables. Glittering chandeliers hung from the ceiling, and everywhere you gazed shone gold and precious stones.

The Princess Hulda had everything that heart could wish. So many playthings, that she did not know which to play with first. She had

so many dolls, and her dolls had so many dresses, that she did not know which they should wear first, and so she did not dress them at all. She had so many chambermaids to keep her baby-house in order, that she did not take any care of her playthings, and let everything stand or lie where it fell.

If the weather was fine, then the princess ventured to go into the large garden which was behind the castle. This garden was filled with tall, shady trees and cooling springs. There were rare flowers and costly fruits everywhere; and Hulda had leave to gather them when she pleased, and she could play in the cool, shady walks whenever she chose. But she did not wish to play there! It gave her little pleasure to run up and down the shady walks, to jump on the moss, to gather a stalk of flowers, or to look for strawberries. If she did not sit as still as a mouse on a velvet cushion in her chamber, then she sat as still as a mouse in the shaded walk in the garden. The birds in the tall trees twittered and hopped, but Hulda never wished to dance or sing.

"Why are you discontented, my little angel?" asked the queen of her daughter.

"Why do you never play, my darling?" inquired the king.

"Why do you never jump about, my jewel?" said the queen; "are your feet lame?"

"I never hear you laugh, my sugar-plum," said the king; "does your head ache?"

But Hulda said there was nothing the matter; only she did not want to play, or laugh, or run about.

"You eat very little, my sweet child," said the king; "tell me what you would like, and you shall have it, if it costs half my kingdom?"

"You dress very poorly, my daughter," said the queen; "tell me if your robes and your jewels do not please you, and you shall have new ones, as many as you want."

But the princess wished for nothing. She had no appetite, and she wanted neither jewels nor new robes. The king and queen did not know what to think of it.

"I do not know what to advise," said the king.

"I only hope she is not ill?" lamented the queen.

But Hulda was not ill, and although she lost her red cheeks, and ate and drank but little, she never complained of any pain.

The king called in the most skilful physicians and asked their advice, but they said the Princess was as healthy as any one could wish, and

that she would soon be contented and happy again. But wise as the doctors were, they were mistaken. Hulda remained the same, and the king and queen might begin to doubt, when they saw her sit the whole day still and silent in one spot.

The king had the loveliest playthings made for her, of gold and silver; she valued them as little as if they had been made of straw. The queen brought her the most beautiful picture-books; Hulda never opened them. The king bought her a pearl ornament, and a gold chain ten yards long, but Hulda let it stay in the case, and never touched it.

The queen made the loveliest little girls come, to dance and sing before the princess. But still the princess sat silently in the corner. She looked neither at the pretty dancers, nor showed by her countenance that she heard the beautiful songs of the little singers.

Her royal parents looked at her in deep distress. The king lost his appetite, and the queen wept till her eyes were red, — but Hulda did not care for that!

One day, one of the maids of honor told the queen of a wise woman, who lived near the castle, and who gave advice and assistance sometimes to the people, but she would not visit any

one; whoever needed her aid must go to her, even if it were the king himself.

The queen related this to her husband, and the next day they went to the wise woman. Fortunately they found her at home, and were well received by her.

The queen told her all that troubled her, and the king promised her three bags of ducats if she should succeed in making the princess smile. "For," said he, "no one knows the time when she smiled."

"Does the princess ever weep?" asked the wise woman.

"That is not necessary," exclaimed the queen. "Is it not sad enough that she has no joy in anything, and never smiles, that you should ask if she ever weeps?"

But the king was astonished at the question of the wise woman. "Why should our daughter weep?" said he. "No, God be thanked! she has no cause for that; she has never shed a tear in her life!"

"That is just," said the wise woman. "The princess cannot properly laugh if she has never cried."

The king and queen marvelled at the words of the wise woman, and would not believe what she said.

But the wise woman, who feared no king, said, "I have told you what I think. If you believe it, it will be for your happiness. If you do not believe it, it is the same to me; and I shall say no more."

Then the queen besought the wise woman, for the love of Heaven, to advise them; and that she and the king would be perfectly satisfied with all she did.

At last the wise woman was persuaded to help them, and said, "There is a well, which is called the well of tears; from it came the first tears which were shed in the world. The princess must seek for this well, if she would be cured; but she must make the journey without horses or carriage, and must have no servant, nor maid of honor to attend her."

"O my poor, dear daughter!" cried the queen; "must she travel alone and on foot through an unknown country, to seek out the well of tears?"

"Only one person must accompany her," said the wise woman, "and I will be that one. Relinquish the princess to me, and I promise to return her to you well and happy."

"In the name of God," said the king, "and if you keep your word, you shall have all your heart can wish."

The queen, in her distress, could not speak. Full of anguish, she thought of the separation from her dear child, and returned to the castle, her eyes filled with tears. When they told the princess that she was to go away the next morning with the wise woman, to search for the well of tears, she said nothing, neither yes nor no, but remained as still as ever.

She did not care at all, that her parents wept so bitterly at parting from her. She was neither sad nor joyful; and she went away with the wise woman without question or complaint. They went on many days, through woods and through fields, over good roads and bad ones. The princess walked on, or stopped, as the wise woman said. She required nothing and complained of nothing; there was nothing pleasant to her and nothing painful.

She saw many strange people on the way, old and young, happy and unhappy. Hulda could not weep with the sad, nor laugh with the gay. She did not pity the sick and infirm, nor rejoice with the well and happy. If a poor person spoke to her, she gave him money, and turned away. If a merry child, then she scarcely nodded and went on. Flowers bloomed on the path, Hulda did not see them. Birds sang, and she did not hear them. Flocks and herds went by, she did not notice them.

After they had been journeying several weeks, she came to a valley that was surrounded by steep cliffs. On the highest peak of the cliff there sat a mother, who held a dead child in her arms, and was weeping bitterly; the tears streamed from her eyes down the side of the cliff, out of which a pure spring welled forth.

"That is the well of tears," said the wise woman to the princess. "Go and bathe your eyes in that water."

Hulda did as she was told. She went to the spring which flowed from the eyes of the weeping mother and let the water pour over her eyelids. Suddenly she felt a dreadful agony in her eyes; she clasped her hands over them, and behold, tears welled through her fingers, and the Princess Hulda wept for the first time in her life!

And as her first tears fell, a great change came over her heart: she thought of the tears her parents shed when she parted from them; she thought of the sick and miserable people she had seen on the way; and as she looked at the weeping mother, with the dead child, she fancied how her own mother would have wept, if she, Hulda, had been torn from her by death. As she thought of all this, tears poured more freely from her eyes, and she wept and wept till her eyes closed in sleep.

In her dream she saw herself placed in a lovely flower-garden. Beautiful, smiling angels, with gold and silver wings, floated over the flowers. Those were the children that Death had taken from the earth. From the shrubbery came forth weeping women, clad in mourning garments; these were the mothers of the dead children, who floated as angels now, over the flowers. Every child-angel floated over its mother and kissed her. Then the mother ceased her weeping and smiled blissfully; and as every mother took an angel in her arms, then her black garments were changed to lily-white robes, golden wings shot from her shoulders, and she herself became an angel.

Then, at last, Hulda saw a large, magnificent woman come from the bushes, who bore a golden crown on her head. As the princess looked more closely, she recognized her own mother, who wept bitterly, and extended her hands towards Hulda. But as Hulda hastened towards her, to soothe and embrace her, then everything disappeared from before her eyes. She awoke, and found herself sitting on the grass, near the wise woman."

Then Hulda began to weep, and said to the wise woman, "I beseech of you from my heart let us return to my mother; she certainly will

think I am dead, and will grieve herself to death for me."

"Then come," said the wise woman, "we shall soon be with your parents."

"So they went on, and soon came to a flowery meadow. Merry children frolicked in it; a few gathered flowers, while the others held them in their hands, and danced in a ring, singing:

"Dancing in a ring,
How merry is the spring!
Now shines the sun, the sky is blue,
And bright the flowers of every hue!
How merry is the spring,
When dancing in the ring!"

"Oh!" exclaimed the Princess Hulda, "how lovely it is here! I should like to gather flowers and dance and sing with the happy children; — but no! ah, no! I must go home to my dear parents."

When they had gone on a little farther, they saw an old blind beggar sitting by the wayside; and near him a little ragged child was sitting, who was his daughter. That troubled the princess, and she said, "Come with me to the castle, you poor blind man, and take your child with you; I will care for you." So they went on, followed by the poor people.

They had not gone far when they came to a little dog lying in the road; he howled pain-

fully, for he had a severe wound in his hind leg. The princess took the poor creature up in her arms, and when they came to a brook she washed his wound, bound it up in a linen cloth, and carried him home in her arms.

Now they came to a broad avenue, shaded by tall, thickly-leaved trees.

"Ah! what kind of trees are those beautiful high ones?" said the princess. "I never saw any like those before. The birds sing so beautifully, which sit there above in the upper branches, and twitter so joyfully, that I never heard anything equal to it in my life."

Then the wise woman laughed silently, and said, "Have you lived so long at home, and yet do not know that this is the way that leads to the castle?"

The princess uttered a cry of joy, for the castle lay a few steps before her, and the king and queen stood on the marble steps.

Hulda could hardly restrain her joy. She ran as fast as she could run to her parents, who recognized their daughter returning, and hastened joyfully and in surprise to meet her.

And as the princess embraced first her father and then her mother, she laughed and cried with joy, and could not be still. How happy were the king and queen when they saw their child so changed! They were glad that Hulda had

brought home the blind beggar and his child and the little dog with her, and they kept them all in the castle.

Princess Hulda was beside herself with joy that she was now at home again with her parents. She sprang and danced as merry as a bird, and shared her playthings and fine robes with the beggar-girl. She besought her parents to keep the wise woman at the castle; and the king and queen consented to her request with pleasure, for they saw that she was really a wise woman, and never forgot what they had to thank her for.

Hulda became the joy of her parents, and remained as good and happy as a good child could be, who had such loving and tender parents, and also one treasure besides; that which can bring comfort to the poor and afflicted. Comfort and help our Hulda carried to all who needed them, whom she sought out and found; and because she could weep with those who wept, she could also laugh with those who were happy.

When the story was finished, Mary was so sleepy, that she did not care whether she was a princess or not. "Especially, mamma," she said, "if they have to laugh and cry, just like other people!"

CHAPTER VIII.

EASTER EGGS.

“WHAT is the matter with them all this morning?” said the old nurse, who had followed the children and her mistress to Russia, and would have gone even to the wilds of Siberia if it were required of her. “The men are kissing each other, and the coachman has brought a hard-boiled egg to ‘babinka,’ as he calls him, — as if I would let the baby eat it; — and then he kissed his hand and said, ‘Christohs vosskress,’ or some heathenish speech that I can’t understand; — then there’s Lena and Dunia saying the same, and everybody is kissing everybody else, and poor old me don’t know what in the world it all means, and what the fuss is all about!”

“It is the custom of the country,” said Mrs. Hamilton, as usual, when she could not explain the matter; “besides that, it is a part of their religion.”

“Their religion! Why, they are not even Catholics. I’m afraid they are dreadful heathenish! and to think of the dear baby’s being born

here ; and Dunia tried to make him bow to her gods, as she calls the picture of the images she has shut up in a box in the corner ! The baby bowed, for he could do nothing else, since he didn't hold his head up then, and she was as pleased as if he knew what he was about. The idea of a civilized child being born in such a heathenish country ! What will he turn out to be ? ”

“ A comfort to us both, I hope, purse,” said Mrs. Hamilton kindly, smiling at the perplexity of the old woman.

“ And she gave him some of her dry bread, ma'am, that she had blessed and shut up with her gods, — a bit of mouldy bread ! But the blessed child did not swallow it, and then she felt so bad about it ! ”

“ That proves she loves the child, and wishes him well,” said Mrs. Hamilton.

“ And she even hangs an amulet over the cradle, to keep away all evil. To think of any blessed child that *I* have the care of needing a charm ! Such a race of pious thieves I never saw before ! ” said the angry old woman, who had lost her thimble, and was now searching in vain for her spectacles, that were lying safely at rest in her huge pocket.

“ You must not feel vexed with them because

their religion is so different from yours," said Mrs. Hamilton.

"Their *religion*! Think of the footman and the coachman kissing each other; and look at the peasants in the streets kissing too!" and the poor old lady, in her mirth at the unexpected sight, forgot her anger at the heathenish country.

"The custom is not confined to peasants and servants alone, nurse. See this beautiful egg, that was sent to me by Madame Peyser, that cost fifty roubles at the glass-works of the Empress."

"Fifty roubles for a plaything!" said the old nurse.

"Not a plaything, but a work of art," said Mrs. Hamilton.

"Those works of art are not much different from big dolls, that I can see," said the old nurse; "when I was young, works of art were n't talked about. And now people are travelling about, and wearing themselves out, a viewing works of art."

This was meant for Mrs. Hamilton, who was not very strong, though her health had been improving since the journey and the sea-voyage.

"I had a present of an egg, too, ma'am," said the old nurse,—a little ashamed of her ill-temper. "To be sure, mine is only a wooden one; and look here! those children have hidden



my thimble in it!" she exclaimed, — delighted at finding it was hollow, and that it made a nice box for her old thimble, so precious from its long service.

"It is a pretty custom enough, I think, — all but the kissing! that is only fit for children and babies. But they tell me they expect a present in money from you in return for the eggs. Is that so; that spoils it all, Mrs. Hamilton?"

"Is that any worse, nurse, than the New Year's gifts and Christmas boxes that we have at home? And how pleasant we think the custom is there!"

"Ah! that is different! everything is different here; but I begin to like it better, ma'am," she said, confidentially. "And the children are so happy here!"

"Ah! yes, nurse, if the children are happy, you will be so, I know; and, nurse, try to make the baby learn English, I want him to speak English first."

"Speak English! What should the darling speak, but his mother tongue?"

Why, have you not noticed his crying 'Da,' if you ask him if anything is pretty? And when he was sleepy the other night, how cunning he was, putting his head on one side and saying, 'Ooa!'"

"All babies do that! that does not mean anything, ma'am."

"O yes! It means in Russ, I am going to sleep, and 'Da' is only 'yes' in another form."

"Num num, mamma!" the baby cried out, as if it had been unnoticed too long.

"There, he is hungry, nurse," said Mrs. Hamilton, "he is asking for something to eat."

"The Blessed Virgin!" said the nurse in afright. "Do you call that talking? And is it a heathenish Russian he is, after all, the blessed creetur, that was! the baby I've tended on my knees so many days and nights, — though the Russian woman *did* have the nursing of him, sometimes, when I had to see to the other little ones, who could not say what they wanted, to these terrible foreigners."

It never occurred to nurse that she was the terrible foreigner here, for the additional respect and politeness she received from that cause she attributed to her own merits.

Then Dunia, the Russian nurse, came in, and finding the baby was crying energetically, "Num num," answered, very coolly, "Sei tchas, Sei tchas dushinka," ("In a minute, darling!") which, to the horror of its old nurse, seemed to quiet him at once.

"There, Dunia will give him something to eat; and, nurse, you will see that he wears his blue dress to-day, as some Russian friends are expected, and Mr. Hamilton prefers his wearing the color proper for infants in this country."

"A proper color for boys, I suppose you mean, ma'am; but what should be the proper color for little girls to wear, then?" she inquired; gravely.

"Pink is the color for little girls, and we think it quite as well to regard those little distinctions, nurse."

"Blue is the color for all little girls at home, ma'am; all fair-haired little girls wear blue ribbons and white dresses; but if poor little Miss Mary had not those pretty black eyes and a nice skin, what would she look like, in pink ribbons? Like a dish of cranberry sauce, with those red cheeks of hers;—but it's the custom

of the country; ma'am, and I suppose we shall all learn it," she said, as Mrs. Hamilton left the room.

"Nurse," said little Peter, who had entered while they were talking, "I heard them tell mamma that, when a young girl was buried, she had to have a coffin lined with pink; and if it was a boy, he must have it lined with blue."

"Mercy on us! — Before the children, too! And what did they say about the old folks?" she asked, her curiosity getting roused, in spite of her better judgment.

"I forget! They had something dark, I believe."

"Don't think anything about it! That's right; forget it all; and go with Dunia and Biba, as she calls him, to see the ladies."

Poor nurse, mentally uttering a groan, sent away the two children, and sighed for home and for a Christian burial. "For what if I should lay my old bones here," she said to herself solemnly, "how should I know what would become of me, and where I *might rise!*"

CHAPTER IX.

POMINATELNUI PONYEDELNIK (RECOLLECTION MONDAY).

DURING the whole of Easter week the churches are open. The holidays are concluded by a mass, when the division of bread takes place. We do not know the meaning of this, but we do know that immense loaves of bread are baked, with the crusts colored red, and stamped with the gold letters, "Christohs vosskress ihs mortvui," which in Russian signify, "Christ is risen from the dead."

These loaves are cut into small pieces and scattered by the priests among the people, who receive them eagerly, and who are waiting about the altars of the churches.

When Dunia and Lena — who have the care of the children — returned from the church, Lena was in delight at her good fortune in having caught a small bit of bread for her portion, which had upon it "Christohs"; but Dunia, who had a bit with the word "mortvui," which signifies death, was almost inconsolable, because it was supposed to foretell some misfortune to her.

Nurse was congratulating one of them and consoling the other. — I am afraid nurse is a little superstitious herself.

“You must not let the children see these things. I am surprised you should pay any attention to it, nurse!” said Mrs. Hamilton.

“I was only hearing about it, ma’am,” she said, innocently, — for nurse had much curiosity.

“And what do you suppose they are to do to-day, ma’am? It is the strangest thing of all, and if you please, I should like to go to it.”

“This is the first ceremony I ever knew you wish to attend, nurse, so what can it be?”

“Why, it is Recollection Monday, ma’am, and they all meet in the churchyard to remember their friends. Who knows,” she said solemnly, “if our departed friends felt we had a day set apart to think of them alone, and that we went to their graves to weep over them, that they would not give us a kind thought in return. If it is the custom of the country, ma’am, I think it is the best one *I* have ever heard of among these curious people. It is so simple and so touching it makes me almost cry to think of it. How little we have in America to remind us of departed friends, — sometimes not even a grave-stone!” she said, wiping her eyes.

“My dear old friend, you must not weep!

You can go, if you please, but I do not believe it will be any comfort after all! Beautiful as the thought is, it will be abused by the public, who cannot approach any delicate thing without injuring it."

The poor old nurse went to see the ceremony, and returned disappointed.

For early in the morning people went by, on foot, or in different kinds of vehicles, loaded with baskets containing red Easter-eggs, loaves of bread, oranges, lemons, gingerbread, and cakes.

Old nurse joined one of the parties of "terrible foreigners," as she always called them, and when she came home, though she was very tired, her volubility was increased by the excitement she had passed through.

"Only think of it, ma'am!" she exclaimed. "First, all the dinners they brought with them were carried into the chapel, to be blessed. In every loaf they had a lighted candle burning, — they cannot do anything without a candle, even in broad daylight! But there was one pretty thought, ma'am. On each loaf there was a little book, containing the name of the friend who was dead and gone. And the priest looked into the book, and after reading the name there, he put that into his prayers, and prayed for the one whose name he read. Then they all went away and wept over the graves of their friends.

“ But *then*, ma’am ! — after that they sat down and had a cloth spread over the grave, and ate there and drank, as if their friend could join with them in spirit, and rejoice to see them there, remembering him in this way.”

“ Could they do that calmly and cheerfully ? ” asked Mrs. Hamilton.

“ O no, ma’am ! Some of them were in great distress, and seemed as if they could not be comforted, and others were — well ! — very comfortable ; just as it is always, ma’am. Some people never seem to feel anything, while others seem ready to drop to pieces, like little Peter’s card-houses, if you just lay a finger on them. Some people, if they have not a great sorrow, will try to make a little one do, and whine and pine over it till you can’t pity them, because they complain so much.”

“ Mamma ! ” said little Mary wonderingly, “ what sort of religion is this, and where could it come from ? For nurse says it is their religion.”

“ It is one of the ceremonies of the Greek Church, that we know nothing about,” said her mother.

“ How came they to have a Greek Church, way up here in Russia, ma’am, if you won’t think me bold for asking ? Some of their customs

seem so pretty and some so heathenish, if I may so speak!" said old nurse.

"This is quite poetical and spiritual, if it were only carried out as it was first intended, I should think," said Mrs. Hamilton; "but there is Peter. What do you think of Recollection Monday, Peter?"

"I don't believe in it *at all*, mamma! Where did they get it? Where did their religion spring from? It is almost like the heathenish things we read of in our history."

"I have heard, my child, that the Christianity of Russia dates from the baptism of the Queen Regent Olga, who is now a saint in the Russian calendar. This Queen, yielding to the persuasions of some Greek missionaries, sailed from Kiow to Constantinople in 955, and was baptized with great ceremony under the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus."

"What a long name!" said little Mary; "and that is as hard to spell as Constantinople, Peter."

"Have you not learnt to spell that yet, Mary?" said her mother, laughing.

"No ma'am," said nurse; "and master Peter asks her every day, and she don't get beyond the first three syllables. Who can expect her to study here, when just looking out o' the window is like a picture-book to her, ma'am!"

“ Did they embrace that religion then, mamma ? Did the Russians care so much for their queen as to believe all she did was right ? ” asked Peter, — unheeding nurse and her remarks, — for he was much interested in solving the mystery of the strange religious rites that had perplexed him so much lately.

“ O no, my boy ! It was reserved for her grandson, Vladimir I., who was one of the most ferocious and yet sagacious tyrants that ever sat on a Russian throne. He had attracted the attention of the neighboring powers, and rather alarmed them by military expeditions and by extensive jurisdiction, and still more by displaying a restless and ambitious character.

“ Each foreign power became anxious to win him over to their particular religious faith, in order to make a political connection. Missionaries were sent to him for that purpose, — Catholic, Mahometan, and even Jewish missionaries ; but they were all disregarded, — though an eloquent Greek found admission to him, and was heard with consideration and pleasure, and dismissed with beautiful presents.”

“ I suppose he believed what his mother believed,” said Peter ; “ children always believe what their mothers do ! ”

“ But he was not a child, Peter ; he was a big Emperor on a throne,” said Mary.

"That is still more to his credit, I think," said Peter, "to mind what his mother told him. I suppose she tried first to convert him."

"We did not think of that, Peter; I dare say you are right about it," said Mrs. Hamilton. "His mother's words might have had more effect than the Greek missionary. But he did a sensible and yet a strange thing. He sent out ten of his wisest subjects—ten wise men, as we say in a story—to examine and search out the true religion."

"As if one could find it on the wayside!" said Peter.

"The wise men went to Bulgaria first, where they were but little impressed with the Mahometan worship. Then they went to Germany, and were still less pleased with the simple rites of some Latin churches there. But when they came to Constantinople, and saw the magnificent church of St. Sophia, where the decorations were so splendid and the ceremonies so awful, they declared that to be the true faith.

"On their return, they told the Emperor, who was quite satisfied with the decision, and determined to take this religion for himself and his people. And how do you suppose he did this, Peter?"

"By sending for some priests to come and

found a church there ; I don't see what else he *could* do ! ”

“ No ; he was too proud to ask them for their priests or for their religion. It was characteristic of a ‘ heathenish people,’ as you call them. He assembled a mighty army, marched down, and besieged the city of Theodosiá, which is Kaffa now.”

“ Did they defend it, mamma ? ”

“ It was a siege of six months before the city was taken, and much blood was shed on both sides ; but then, a sufficient number of popes and archimandrites were ready for the pious conqueror to take home.”

“ That is the last way of getting religion that I ever heard of,” said nurse, “ a fighting for it.”

“ And what did he do then ? ” asked Peter, hardly listening to what had gone before, and asking as you children always do.

“ What did he do, *then* ? ”

“ Then he did as strange a thing. He demanded of these Emperors, Basil and Constantine, whom he had just conquered, the hand of their sister in marriage ! ”

“ I hope they refused it ! ” said Peter, indignantly.

“ No, they felt obliged to sacrifice their sister Anne to the ambition of a barbarian whom she hated.”

"How could they do so, ma'am?"

"They did it to save Constantinople from the fate of Theodosia,—from being besieged," she answered.

"And what did he do *then*?" said Peter.

"*Then* he returned the territory he had taken away from them, after marrying the princess and being baptized on the same day."

"Why, it ends like all the fairy stories," said Mary; "they all marry a princess and live happily ever after. *Did* they live happily ever after, mamma?"

"So the story says," said Mrs. Hamilton. "He passed the rest of his life in spreading the new religion and destroying all paganism."

"Then they were pagans, mamma, and nurse was not wrong thinking they were heathenish once?"

"Do you suppose they got rid of all their pagan notions then? Don't you suppose some of them were kept, Mrs. Hamilton," said nurse, a little awe-struck at the idea.

"They had formerly human sacrifices, I have read, and now, instead of thinking virtuous conduct and a pure life can make us acceptable to that heavenly Power to which we owe all our blessings, my children, they think they can gain the favor of Heaven by these unmeaning rites and ceremonies, some of which you have witnessed."

"Poor creeturs," said old nurse, kindly, "what kind of a religion could you expect to get by fighting for it, children? I won't laugh at their gods again, considering they 're not *real* heathen, and have given up their sacrifices to broken idols. To think of my being in an idolatrous country, or she that *was*, even if they *have* got over it some. Then this is the religion of the *Greek* Church, up in Russia, ma'am. We must live and learn, but I little expected to get among idols, or to see people a bowing to graven images in my poor old lifetime."

"But you like to live here, nurse, with us, you know," said little Mary.

"Yes, darling, and when I hear you say your little prayers at night, and your hymn, 'Now I lay me down to sleep,' I am not afraid of the dreadful *foreigners*, and I don't mind if the baby *does* bow to the image so prettily, as it pleases poor Dunia. I remember what Christ said, about doing as you would be done by, and at the same time he said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven'; so I am sure to feel safe, where the children are!"

"That is quite right. We will leave you now, as you must be tired after all you have seen."

"Seeing those poor creatures crying over the

graves made me feel kind o' lonesome, and I was glad to get home. How it does *make home*, ma'am, to have children about you. I never expected to call *this*, home," said nurse.

"Well, good night, and pleasant dreams!" said Mrs. Hamilton, as she left the room.

"Pleasant dreams! it has been like a horrid nightmare to me, to-day," said nurse, talking to herself. "Those people eating on the graves, sets one a thinking of ghosts and hobgoblins, if there was any such things," she said, looking at little Mary, who was listening with her black eyes wide open.

"Now go to sleep dear, and don't dream of all they have been saying; there is *one* God, the Father of all, and who takes care of the little ones and the sparrows, like you and me! Good night."

CHAPTER X.

THE WINTER PALACE. — THE HERMITAGE.

"Now, children, the carriage is ready, and we are all going to visit the Winter Palace and the Hermitage!" said Mr. Hamilton.

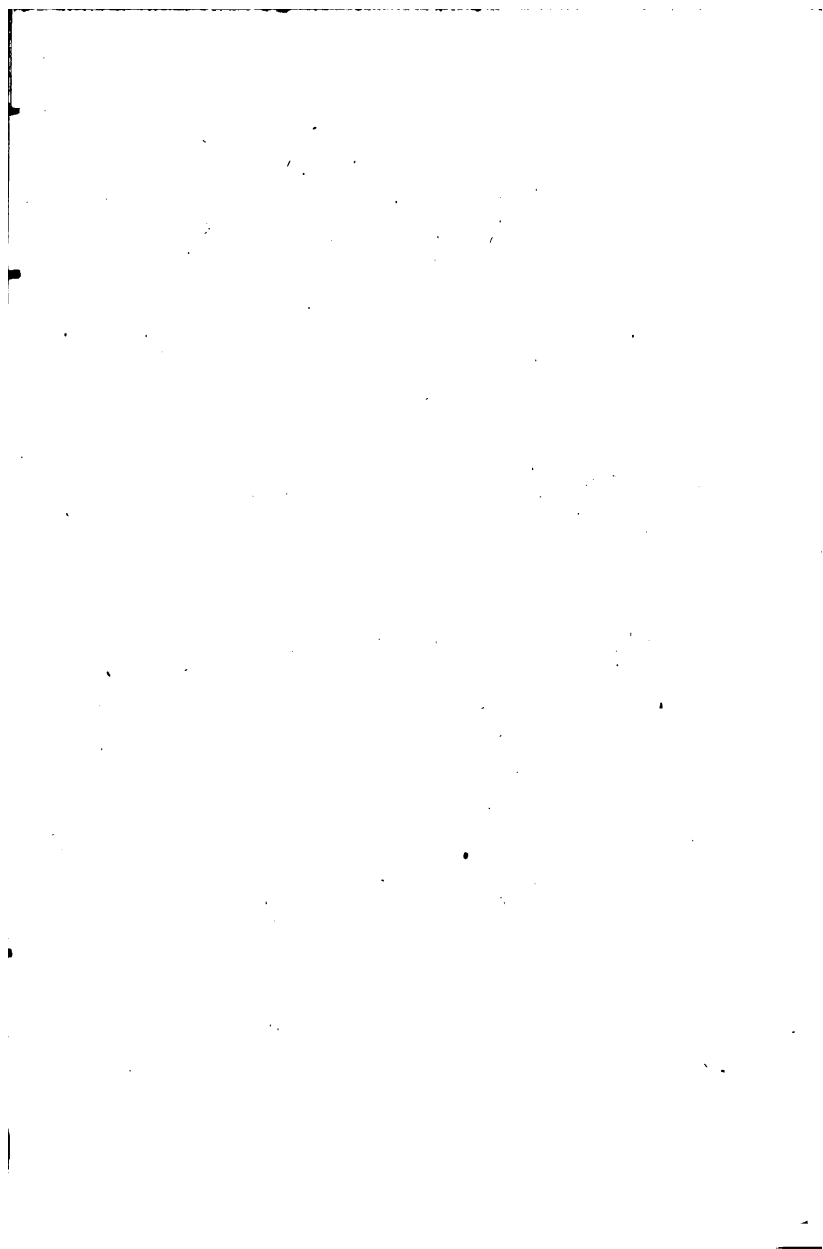
"May I go too, papa?" asked little Mary.

"No, my dear, not to-day," interrupted Mrs. Hamilton; "there are too many steps for a little girl to climb without being very tired. Papa will take you to-morrow to drive in the droshky, which will be fine!"

"O yes, to-morrow! that will be nice!" she said. Will not to-morrow be always better than than to-day?

"But, father," said Peter, "have you a 'permit'? we cannot go without one," he said; for he was always looking about in search of various kinds of information, which sometimes proved valuable, and at others made him seem officious and forward.

"Certainly!" his father answered; "but unless we hurry, we shall not have time to see half there is to be looked at in the different galleries.





"We'll take a rapid view to-day, and see all that is best worth seeing, then go again another time."

They were soon driving fast down the Nefsky, and were attracted by the varied sights of a foreign city, as usual.

"There is a bread-merchant," said Walter. "Are you hungry to-day, Peter? What a singular custom it is, to sell everything in the streets! That boy has a loaf as large as he can lift. There is a sledge from the country, and they are baiting the horses in the street. May I ask that gendarme if this is the way?"

"If you wish to take that trouble, Peter."

"I do believe," said Walter, "he would make an excuse to leave the carriage any time for the sake of a few words with a soldier. There! he is running back!"

Peter brought the needed information; that is, he had had a little run, which he always preferred to a long drive; and very soon the carriage stopped at the superb Winter Palace.

On ascending the steps the gendarme demanded the "permit," and Mr. Hamilton received another in exchange at the door.

"How very strict they always are!" said Peter.

"Yes! It is the custom," said his father.

"Now hurry up the broad staircase, and be sure not to leave the room without me, or you will be lost!"

"O mamma!" exclaimed Walter, "do look at these beautiful vases, all made of lapis-lazuli; and here are some of malachite; and see! they are taller than I am!"

"This is what we read of in the Bible. This malachite comes from Siberia, where there are copper mines. But there is your father going into Peter the Great's room."

"Here, boys!" he exclaimed on entering; "here is a beautiful golden egg! Watch now, as it is opened!"

"What is that; is that another egg?"

"Yes; look, Peter; still another, and another, and now see!"

"O, a beautiful watch! I wish that was mine. And look at this one, shut up in a yellow-bird, and this in a diamond cross! How many watches did Peter have? A dozen, do you think?"

"O," laughed his father, "look in at the cases as you go by, and you will soon be tired of counting the watches. There are several hundred, all of them presented to Peter. The whole gallery is filled with curiosities sent to him, and by and by we shall see a figure seated in a chair, dressed to represent him as he appeared in full dress."

"There it is!" exclaimed Walter. "I see it, and the people are crossing themselves before it!"

"Yes! now walk on, and tell me what you see."

"Father, come quick! here is a splendid peacock, and it is turning round and round, as if it were alive," shouted Peter.

"Ah! we are fortunate. That party on our right is the family of the American Minister; and the guard has wound up the machinery of the peacock, as a particular favor to them. So we have the benefit of it. Now listen, and when the peacock lifts its head you will hear it call."

"Just as if it was alive, father?" asked Peter.

"Yes! you could not tell the difference. How beautifully he spreads his tail!"

"That reminds me of the Italians," said Mrs. Hamilton, "who say, when any one is making a show, *Il pavoneggiarsi*, or, He makes a peacock of himself."

"Why don't you say it in the Yankee vernacular, mamma?" said Walter, — "that is, 'he makes a spread!'"

"You must excuse him, my dear," said Mr. Hamilton; "boys are so rough. Look at the spots on the tail of the peacock; they are real precious stones! That was indeed a valuable present to Peter! Now, boys, look! he is showing his

feathers for the last time, and calling, as if to ask how you like his looks."

The beautiful bird proudly raised his head and opened his beak, ruffling his feathers and croaking so loudly that Peter sprang towards his father,—as if the gold and silver bird could fly from its stand!

"Here is Peter the Great's walking-stick, if you need protection, my boy," said Mr. Hamilton, laughing. It was of solid iron, and none of the party could lift it, or at least could not hold it out straight.

"It is not much better than an old crow-bar!" said our Peter, contemptuously.

"You naughty Yankee boy, everything belonging to Peter the Great is revered by the Russians. Here are two sides of a long gallery filled with presents to him, and curiosities that he collected."

"It is astonishing to me," said Mrs. Hamilton, "how he found time for everything. He carved so beautifully in ivory, which is very slow work, and then he invented many things. There is a cabriolet in the collection where he measured the time of the wheels' revolving by machinery in a box behind him. I don't see why he cared for all these things, or how he had time for half of them. I never have any time, and I never saw any one who had," she said, discontentedly.

"Mamma, do you remember the anecdote of the Indian?" said Walter.

"No, dear; what was it?"

"Why, he said, when some one complained of not having any time, — 'I suppose you have all the time there is!'"

"That is very true, Walter, and as we have not any *more* than there is, we must hurry to see the crown jewels before it is too late."

"They are here," he said.

And there were girdles and tassels formed of diamonds as large as a pea. They were strung, and wound into a cord made of three strands, as large as my finger, — much larger than yours! and with heavy tassels hanging to them.

"How lovely these flowers are!" said Mrs. Hamilton.

For there were lovely flowers made of precious stones, — as if an *Empress* knew that flowers were lovelier than jewels; their leaves were made of emeralds; the roses were of pink diamonds, and the lilies, of pearls. These bouquets were as large as you could carry in your hand, if you gathered it in the field. Does not this sound like a fairy story? — but it is all true; and there were glass cases filled with these flowers. If you could live in that country, — where the diamonds are so plenty that the ladies'

dresses are looped up with bunches of them, and where the Emperor's dish-covers are marked with them, and even the pillars in the church are studded with them, — perhaps you would feel as the Russians do, who run all day after a lost flower or a fallen leaf in the Emperor's garden ; and you might not value the little bright speck in a ring quite so much — just because people call it a diamond.

“ After looking at these, and admiring them, they saw the crown, that was wholly made of diamonds. It was close and round like a skull-cap, and on the top of it was an immense diamond, as large as an egg.

“ How magnificent this is ! Queen Victoria has not anything so handsome, I know,” said Walter.

“ I saw the crown in England,” said Mr. Hamilton. “ It was made partly of crimson velvet, and studded with small diamonds. How the Russian ladies who were with us laughed ! ”

“ Laughed at the crown, papa ! ”

“ They laughed at the crown jewels, as they are called, because they are so diminutive, compared to the beauty and richness of those belonging to the Russian Empire.”

“ Perhaps the Russian barbarians, as they were formerly called, valued jewels more than the

English monarchs did, and took more pains in collecting them," said Mrs. Hamilton.

"Catherine II. certainly collected a great many, not only from the Turks at the Crimea, but she sent to Pompeii, and the Russians are said to have ransacked the graves of the original inhabitants of Siberia and Caucasus, which were searched by the Cossacks and Tartars; and these spoils the Russian government have obtained from those people, and they are preserved with all the other valuable relics that can be found. They are principally to be seen at the Hermitage. We have tickets, and we can go there now. The Hermitage is not what you think, children, a home made for a hermit, but it is a beautiful palace built by the Empress Catherine II. for her own pleasure, where she could retire from the cares of her court. That enchanted garden, which is heated in winter by hot-air flues beneath the brick floor, on which it is made, and which is illuminated in summer, and where rare birds fluttered under nets of gold wire, is still to be seen; but the Empress and the birds are passed away. It belonged to this palace, where everything rare is to be found. There was a lovely theatre here, only large enough for the private friends of the Empress, and where but few were ad-

mitted at a time. Men of learning came here, and artists, with their own paintings, and musicians, with their compositions. It was built for this purpose, and all were encouraged here, and made happy and free.

"There is a wonderful collection of paintings, very rare and beautiful. Landscapes, where the grass seems growing greener than it grows ever here; cattle, grazing beneath the trees, whose leaves scatter the sunbeams this pale land rarely sees; and portraits of lovely faces, that make us think the saints and angels are about us."

"And who could paint them all, father?"

"They are from the old masters, and are more valuable because they can never be repeated."

"Do they call them the *old* masters, because they had to live a long life before they could paint well, and were old men before they were famous?"

"The boy is not far from right," said Mrs. Hamilton.

"You do ask such strange questions!" said Walter.

"Well, how should I know?" said Peter.

"There is something to astonish you, Peter, in the library, and your mother and Walter too, I think."

"What is it?" said Mrs. Hamilton, forgetting

Peter's question ; " what will astonish me, who begin to think I cannot be more astonished than I have been already, ever since I first came, and found the sun up at midnight ? "

" That was because it was summer, mother ! " said Walter, imparting a little information, as you children like to do.

" What should you think of seeing the Bible in the different tongues of the various tribes of American Indians, the Sioux, the Camanches, &c. ? " asked Mr. Hamilton.

" I should think it impossible, " she answered.

" Well, I have seen them, " he said. " The library is very fine in the Hermitage, and when I tell you the American Indian and *his* literature are unforgotten, you may feel sure that the English, French, German, and Italian are remembered. Even our new American novels are to be found untranslated here. "

" If papa should write a book, would it be found there ? " said Peter.

" Certainly, if I write a description of our residence here, and put the boys into it. How should you like that, Peter ? You would not feel so shy as you did when you first came, and thought you were going to be placed in a picture. "

" The child is very much changed since we came, " said Mrs. Hamilton.

Peter considered a few moments before answering, and said : "I should like it very much indeed, papa, if you will make me speak good English in the book, for Mr. Peyser said one day that I did not speak good English."

"That is very amusing ! Mr. Peyser is a German ; and he thinks the Germans can speak correctly, does he ?"

"He only said we were careless, mamma ; and he laughed at me for saying something was 'pretty miserable,' which he pretended he could not understand. I wish he could hear old nurse speak. I am sure he could not understand her."

"Nor could she understand his strong German accent. I hope the baby will not speak English with an accent, for he never hears the letter H. What shall we do ?"

"Let him learn it from the other children," said Mr. Hamilton. "I am not afraid of it. But here we are, at the Hermitage !"

And there let us leave them.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SPRING. — THE NEVA.

"O MAMMA, mamma, there is a dandelion!" exclaimed little Mary the next morning, her eyes dancing and her cheeks flushing with delight.

"Did not you ever see a dandelion before, Mary?" said the old nurse, a little impatiently.

"But it makes me think of home, mamma, and the green fields, and when we used to gather buttercups and clover in the meadow. And see those little girls! they all have dandelion wreaths on their heads. How pretty they are! We never made wreaths of dandelions, only of clover and lilacs, and we used to string columbines on a thread for necklaces. How beautiful those wreaths are! How can they make them?"

"They twist the long, pliant stalks of the dandelions together, and they are easily wound into a wreath," said Mrs. Hamilton.

Just at this moment Dunia entered the room, bringing the baby, who was dressed up with a

yellow dandelion wreath on his curls, and was smiling and bowing like a polite little Russian, as he was.

Mary looked as if she thought the wreath had better be on her head than the baby's, but she inwardly controlled herself, swallowing rather violently, however.

"What is the matter, little Mary?" said the old nurse; "does not your breakfast sit easy? It is the Easter eggs, I know."

But Dunia advanced slowly, taking the wreath from the baby, who only bowed, and said, "Da!"

"She handed it with great gravity to little Mary, and said, slowly, 'Für dich!'"

"It is for you, Mary," said Mrs. Hamilton. "Some of the children sent it to you. Thank Dunia for it."

Dunia could understand "Tank," as she pronounced it always; for Dunia was born in Russia, though in a German town there, and she could speak Russ, German, and a little English, sometimes. We found it more difficult to understand the English than the other languages she spoke. It was such a strange medley of sounds.

"Bringt es tree mal," she said, smiling.

"Did you say she 'brought it three mile'?"

asked the nurse, complacently understanding and interpreting her remark.

“Nein!” (No.)

“O, nine mile! That is very polite; I think these curious foreigners *are* very polite, though they *do* have queer customs. What should we think of carrying a bunch of dandelions nine mile to make a present of! If ’t was the roots to stew up and make a syrup for a sick man, or even a dish o’ greens to remind one of home, it would not be so bad; but nine mile for a bunch of posies, handsome as they are, is too much.”

“They are much handsomer and larger than the dandelions we have in America, and it is a very pretty custom for all the little girls to wear them. Put it on, Mary!” said Mrs. Hamilton, smiling to see the child’s hesitation. “Dunia says the children came three times to see you.”

“O, is that all she said?” exclaimed nurse.

“‘Three times,’ she meant to say,” replied Mrs. Hamilton; “but she called it ‘*tree* mal,’ instead of ‘dreimal’ in German, which is easier for us to understand; if she only would speak German it would be much less trouble.”

“And this is the nurse, ma’am, who was recommended to you as speaking English so nicely?”

"Yes! they told me she spoke English charmingly:—but she understands what you tell her to do, I hope, nurse?"

"O yes, ma'am! but that poor '*babinka*,' as she calls him,—she *will* speak her dreadful German to him, and he even said '*Ja!*' yesterday."

"Is that anything wrong, do you think, nurse?" said Mrs. Hamilton, laughing.

"O no, ma'am! but how can the darling understand her? He will certainly sprain his brains! I must tell the doctor about it."

"It is a custom of the country for the physician to come in every week, as he is paid by the year, whether we are ill or not, and you may ask him. But many of the children here speak several languages without any difficulty."

"How came they to have such a curious country? Why don't they all speak the same mother tongue,—as they do in most countries? They seem to have a mother tongue and father tongue; for the mother is often a German, and the father a Frenchman, and perhaps the grandfather a Russian or a Swede. I never dreamt of such a country! When I studied geography, the countries were all divided off on the map, with a green border for one, and a red border for another, and a yellow border for a third, and I thought the

folks lived where they belonged, inside of their own boundaries, not wandering about, worrying other folks to learn their different languages, and never speaking an English word, or if they do, putting it in the wrong place. Who'd ever suppose one mile meant 'once,' or that 'nine,' a good, respectable English word, — that we're *sure* of, and we aren't sure of much in this foreign country, — should turn out to be the Dutch for 'No!' But that 'no' is a good, honest word," she said, "and I am glad the baby says *that* as if he meant it. Goodness! There's a cannon firing! There isn't any war here, ma'am, is there?" she asked, in affright.

"O no, nurse! there is nothing to trouble you here."

"Ever since my son James went to the wars, ma'am, I can't hear a cannon without trembling all over. When he went away, ma'am, it went straight to my heart, and I've had a trembling there ever since!"

"Mamma! mamma! they are celebrating the opening of the river!" said Walter.

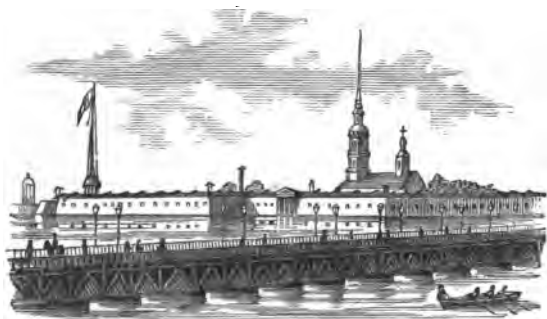
"What can the boy mean? How can they ever open a river?" asked nurse, in amaze.

"It is the Neva! the ice is breaking up!" cried Walter. "They have gone across to the Emperor, to carry him a goblet of the water from the

Neva, and he has to drink it, and then he will fill the goblet with ducats, to pay them for the draught. Huzza!" cried Walter.

"Who has gone?" they inquired.

"Why, the commandant of the fortress and the officers of his suite in full uniform. They have taken an elegant gondola, and the guns



were fired, and the Emperor has taken the water and drank it, and now they are coming back. He always has to fill the goblet with gold after he has swallowed the water."

"I'd carry a water-pail!" said old nurse, contemptuously.

"They used to increase the size of the goblet, mamma, every year, and so now they are obliged to have one fixed price for it, and that is two hundred ducats."

“Two hundred ducats for a draught of water! Any spring from a New-England hill would be as clear,” said nurse. “I only wish we had a well here, that I could draw a bucket of water, and not have to depend on that old Russian with his cask and old horse to bring it every morning from the river.”

“The Emperor Alexander thought so much of the Neva water, nurse, that he carried a bottle of it with him, closely corked, on his journey to Moscow,” said Walter.

“As if it would be better than the fresh water he would find when he got there!” exclaimed nurse. “Was he the Emperor who founded this city, ma’am?”

“No, Peter the Great was the founder of St. Petersburg; though Catherine II. finished many designs commenced by Peter. They are called in Russia the founder and the finisher. Peter placed the city where it could be accessible to foreigners, as he knew his people would learn from other nations the best things those could do. Even now there are manufactures of French articles or of German, which are thought to be imported, but are skilfully imitated in this country. French and German workmen are employed here. And *now*, you see why there is no language spoken exclusively; it is because the good

Emperor sought out the well-being of his people, and wished them to learn from all countries the best things to be taught. It was many years ago and we see the good effects of it now."

"Mamma, there is a small house here built by Peter the Great himself, and it is furnished with a simple desk and chairs as he left it. And there is a little boat, mamma, that was built by him, and father says it has been repaired, and painted, and coppered, and scrubbed, and polished, till there is hardly a bit of the original boat left."

"That shows how much they value it, — there is some sense in keeping *that*," said nurse.

"She found some of Dunia's treasures this morning, mamma," whispered little Mary.

"What is the child, saying, ma'am? I did find some bits of old bones and rags, and I was going to throw them out; but Dunia had *such a turn*, and called out, 'Nine! nine!' I had not counted them, and did not care how many there were, whether they were nine or ten, if I only got rid o' them. But when she began to cry, that is a language we all know, ma'am, and I gave them back to her. She began crossing herself and kissing them; so I suppose they were what folks call *relics*. Poor, miserable rags they were!"

"It is not so much the real value of the article, but the value we give to it, nurse, you must recollect."

"And, nurse, you must remember that old black-silk handkerchief you look at sometimes, and never let us touch," said Mary, timidly.

"My boy! my boy!" exclaimed poor nurse, in a deluge of tears.

"Let us leave her alone, my dear," said Mrs. Hamilton gently.

"She is thinking of her son, who went to the wars," said little Mary, reverently, as she quietly closed the door. "Poor nurse!"

"Come with me, Mary, into the cabinet," said Mrs. Hamilton kindly, taking her little girl into the study and looking over some books, as if in search of something.

"There, Mary," she said, "I have found a little poem for you, written by a girl who loved the dandelion, as a flower, as much as you seem to like it."

"But it is only because it makes me think of home, mamma!" she answered.

"Ah! that is the reason you like it then! Travellers when far away from home have sometimes met a little, common flower, such as grew by their own doorstep, and it has moved them to tears."

"Tears, mamma! It makes me laugh and clap my hands with joy."

"Then my little girl better sit down quietly, and learn the little poem to say to the boys when they come home."

So Mary took the book, and sat quietly a few minutes, and then exclaimed, "Let me read it first, to you, mamma," and she commenced reading, very slowly and carefully, these words:—

"'THE DANDELION.'

But who *ever* would have thought of writing poetry to a dandelion, mamma?"

"I think my little girl would, this morning, if she had been wise enough," her mother answered, with a smile.

"So I should, mamma! I wanted to sing, and if I had known these verses, I believe I should have sung them at once."

"Are you going to read them to me, my dear? I will dispense with the singing at present."

"O yes, mamma, now I will begin. 'The Dandelion!'" she read in a loud tone.

Then Walter and Peter came in, and the book was thrown down; and it laid in the same spot till I came by and put it on the shelf where it properly belongs, after I had written the lines for you;—for you, too, may be in a

foreign country some time, and may be glad to see a dandelion with a homely face, to remind you of your own country.

THE DANDELION.

Here's a song for the Gypsy King!
For the Dandelion bold!
From the lowliest grass he'll spring,
With a crown of the richest gold.
Young children his captives are,
And they forge his chains of green;
As curls in their shining hair,
The fetters bright are seen;
Or as mermaids ringlets wear,
The sea-flower's leaves of green.

He's a Gypsy among the flowers!
No heart hath a place for him;
So we'll take him home to ours,
And sing him a crowning hymn:
For when Poverty creeps abroad,
For the bread she dare not buy,
The 'flower's a smile from God,'
To gladden her aching eye,
And she kneels on the lowly sod,
And shouteth a joyful cry.

Then sing to the Gypsy King!
To the Dandelion bold!
Though a lowly, a scornèd thing,
Its life hath not half been told;
For it sits by the cottage door,
In its night-cap of warm white down,
And it says to the timid poor,
'Have faith, if the tempest frown';
But it telleth one truth far more, —
'*T is the lowly that wears the crown!*

I don't think much of poetry myself, but that seems to have a pretty moral, and as we are living here among Emperors and grand people, it is as well to keep humble things in your mind.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ISLANDS.

"My dear," said Mr. Hamilton, "I think it is time for us to have your garden made, if you want one."

"Have it made, Mr. Hamilton ; I don't quite understand you."

"They take flowers from the greenhouses, mamma, and plant them in rows in their gardens, and fancy they have grown there," said Mary.

"The season is too short for the annuals to arrive at perfection," said Mr. Hamilton, "and it is quite an ingenious mode of hurrying Nature about her work."

"Poor Dame Nature, mamma, must be astonished sometimes. They say the gardens at the Hermitage are heated by pipes beneath them."

"Will the flowers grow as well there as under a bright sun?" inquired Mrs. Hamilton.

"Why, certainly, like the greenhouse plants," he replied.

"I don't like greenhouse plants, mamma," said little Mary.

"A little girl who is fond of the dandelion will hardly care much for exotics," she answered.

"I will make my garden, too, mamma, and have dandelions and daisies all in rows in it."

"Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
With silver bells and cockle shells,
And daisies all in a row," —

sang Peter, who came in full of spirits from seeing sights in the city.

"So you are going to have an artificial garden, Mary, and mean to plant flowers in blossom, as some of the rich people do, because the season is so short. That is a very good fashion, if your garden would only keep in bloom. But, mamma, we have seen some *real* flowers."

"Some real flowers, Peter; and who have seen them? Be a little more definite in your remarks," his mother answered.

"Why, Walter and I went with Mr. Peyser, — papa gave us leave, *truly*! — and we went to see some beautiful islands near the city. And there we found real, live wild-flowers growing on them, just such as we have at home; they

were anemones, Solomon's seal, lilies of the valley, and all the common flowers. Is not that wonderful, mamma?"

"Yes, I think it is very wonderful that they should be alive," she answered, laughing at his eagerness.

"O *no*, mamma! I mean, is it not wonderful that the same wild-flowers should grow here as in America?"

"Yes, my dear, if you had not told me you had seen them, I should not have supposed our little wood anemone and *Houstonia* could have lived in this cold country."

"I felt real glad to see them, mother. They made me think of our pleasant woods at home. They have so many greenhouses here belonging to the great houses, and artificial flowers blooming in sand all winter, that I do not care much about them. It is because the summer is so short, I think, they try to make the winter seem like summer, with the hot Russian stoves and the flowers between the windows. How short is the summer, mother?"

"I remember, Peter, your grandfather told me there were but three hot days in summer," she answered.

"Then it is most time to look out for winter," he said, in glee; "we have had more than three hot days already."

"Don't you enjoy the summer, Peter? You have not told me what you saw on your excursion to-day."

"Certainly, mamma, I do enjoy summer, and so I am in a hurry to enjoy the winter too."

His mother laughed, and repeated her question. "What did you see besides the wild-flowers?"

"Why, we went to an island where there is a convent, and the monks let us in to look around, and they let us have a portion of their dinner to eat; and what do you think they always live on, and have nothing else to eat? Plain bread and fish. We ate some of it; but I was glad to get away."

"Then did you come right home?" asked little Mary, who thought that recital was not very amusing.

"No, we went to another beautiful island, that was formerly used for sacrifices."

"What do you mean, my dear? what were the sacrifices for?"

"There were sacrifices made there of beautiful horses."

"What for?" asked Mary, innocently.

"Why, to appease the Devil!" said Peter, bluntly.

Poor Mary was horrified; and thought she

ought not to ask questions, for she had often been told so.

"It was not my fault, mother," she said, perplexed.

"What was not your fault?"

"That he should say a bad word."

"No, dear; it was a strange custom, and if Peter has not any more wonders to tell us, we shall send him away. I thought you went to see the churches, Peter."

"So we did, mamma, and found people crossing themselves at every corner of the streets. They do not cross themselves exactly as the Catholics do,—I wonder why?"

"They think the Catholics are quite wrong," said Mrs. Hamilton.

"How are they wrong, mamma?"

"I do not say they are wrong; but these people say the only true Christians are those of the Greek Church, and that Christianity means the Holy Trinity, and with their three fingers they mean to represent the Trinity. They make the sign of the cross with only three fingers, and the Catholics use the whole hand. But tell us about the churches; you cannot understand all this."

"No, mother; but it is very solemn sometimes to see them stop at the corners of the streets and

bow to the picture of the Virgin. They are very religious, I think."

"There is nurse coming, Peter ; she will not agree with you, perhaps."



"Ah ! what is the boy saying ? No, little Peter, it is not the bowing and scraping that makes true religion. What is deep in the heart does not come out so easy on the fingers," said nurse, vigorously.

"These religious sects differ among themselves,

I find ; the whole religion of the Greek Church in Russia consists more in outward religious observances than that of any other people," said Mrs. Hamilton.

"I am glad to hear it, ma'am, for I never *heard* and *saw* so much religion before," said nurse.

"If we should all go to Rome, before we return to America, what would you say there ?"

"Rome is where the Pope lives : well, I shall just wait, ma'am, till we get there, before I can say. That Pope is the head of them all, I believe."

"I know, mamma, *one* reason why nurse does not think much of their religion. It is because she was cheated so the other day," said Peter, not daring to laugh.

"How was she cheated ?" asked Mrs. Hamilton.

"Why, I went, ma'am, to buy a new dress for the warm weather ; I thought there would never be any warm weather here, and I did not bring one with me. When I went to the shops, I was astonished to find them all under one roof. I don't mean all the shops in the city, — but everything I wished to buy could be bought in the different rooms of this large building, — from stockings and shoes to a bonnet or a side-saddle !"

"Did you want a side-saddle, nurse ?"

“Don’t be silly, child !”

“Were you not pleased with your purchases, nurse ?”

“O yes, ma’am ! some of the things were very nice ; but some of the others were sham ; nothing but gilded leather, and such things !” she said, scornfully. “They are all a set of pious thieves, as I knew before !”

“Here is something pretty for the baby,” said Mrs. Hamilton, bringing out a new cup and spoon of gold and silver embossed work. “These are made only in Russia. How do you like these ?”

Nurse was in delight ; and hurried off to the baby, to try and make him share her pleasure in the gift.

“Mother,” said Peter, “do you remember how we thought if we came to Russia we should see a wild country, where there were few shops, and where the bears and wolves would chase us if we walked out alone ; and little John, who lives at home by the sea-shore, cried because Mary was coming here, and then he said he wished he was coming too, to fight the bears and keep them away from her ?”

“*We* thought there were no shops, Peter ; you mean *you* thought so. That is a child’s way of understanding, to suppose every one thinks as he does.”

"Ah! but, mamma, you thought so too; and father laughed when you asked him about our bringing plenty of nice new clothes, because we could not get them here. And see how much handsomer everything is here than in America. That was when grandfather laughed, and said there were but three hot days in summer, as you were asking about your new thin dresses. Are n't you sorry you believed him, and have nothing but thick ones to wear?"

"The summer is warmer than I thought it could be; but they tell me it will soon be over. I should like to drive out into the country, and see what the vegetation looks like."

"Should you like to drive out?" said Mr. Hamilton, entering the room as if he had heard what she said. "I am going to Peterhof, and if you would like to go with me, I think you would enjoy it."

"I should certainly like it very much," she answered; "but must we have a driver and those fearfully wild, prancing horses you Russians admire so much."

Mr. Hamilton laughed, and asked if she thought the horses were really so very wild as they appeared.

"Why, certainly," she answered; "they never hold their heads up together, all at once; and

one of them is dancing always, as if that was all he had to do."

"That is very true; he is fastened in that position. The Russians are fond of show, as you see, and this is the common custom, to have one horse dancing, as you would say, and the others at work to pull the carriage. Will you go, now that you are assured there is more of art than spirit in his performance?"

She readily consented, after hearing this sensible reason for the remarkable conduct of the animal, which had previously distressed her, though she had not dared complain.

Peter ran out to give directions, and to tell the driver his mother was quite ready; and with a little trepidation at her heart, and a smothered sigh at the customs of the country on her lips, the two set out on their journey to Peterhof.

CHAPTER XIII.

PETERHOF. — FOUNDLING HOSPITAL.

“It is really very cold,” said Mr. Hamilton, wrapping his cloak more closely around him ; but Mrs. Hamilton, seeing nothing but prancing horses, turned her head resolutely away, and tried to forget her fears.

As they came out into the country the beautiful palaces were not so frequently seen ; but they passed many log-houses of one story, like our Western cabins, but much larger and more convenient. The vegetation was of stunted growth, and lilies of the valley lined the way. But the gardens were very lovely. The flowers, being transplanted from greenhouses, were very luxuriant, and large green grass-plats were seen, with immense beds of roses or verbenas of one shade planted together ; and the effect was like a tapestry carpet with high-colored bouquets of flowers scattered on a green ground, or rather, like immense baskets of flowers planted at intervals on the greensward. This arrangement of having large beds of flowers of one kind and

color, so arranged in groups as to form lively contrasts, adds much to the beauty of the gardens.

The only thing resembling it, that we have ever seen here, is the frequent grouping of red, white, and blue flowers, which were often planted together, during the short rage for those colors, which subsided as the war grew more serious, and the solemnity of it prevented fanciful devices being longer cared for.

On the 1st of May in St. Petersburg all the inhabitants are in motion to welcome the coming of the warm weather. Throughout the towns of Russia, on the same day, they are keeping the same festival.

On the outside of the city, very near the sea, and on one of Peter the Great's battle-fields with the Swedes, he built the Castle of Catherinenhof and the gardens. For many years these were the only resorts of the kind for the people, and now they are much enlarged and extended, and still visited on the 1st of May. The gardens are filled with bowling-greens and restaurants, and carriages are moving all day. Even the Emperor is out, with his brilliant staff, and the crowd watch till he appears; and when he has gone by, they all return to their homes, satisfied for the day.

After passing Catherinenhof, many beautiful country-houses were seen as they went to Peterhof. The coast is low and flat near St. Petersburg; but at the southern part of the gulf there is a high cliff, called the Klint. Peterhof and Oranienbaum are on the side of the cliff, and so beautiful terraces extend from it to the sea.

In the centre of Peterhof is the old Castle, built by Peter the Great.

The road to Peterhof is broad, well paved, and on each side of it are verst-stones, or, as we should say, mile-stones. And as Mr. Hamilton passed one, he said, "My friend Orloff lives at the sixth verst."

Mrs. Hamilton asked what he meant. He laughed, and said there was so little variety here to mark the spot, that, in the flat, undistinguishable country around, people reckoned by mile-stones.

"But here we approach to the Castle," he exclaimed.

"There is no beauty in the Castle itself," said Mrs. Hamilton.

"No, it is like all the houses built by Peter, even the same color, yellow, which they all seem to have."

"It is strange that the Castle should not look towards the sea, the view is so beautiful!"

"Yes, it is a whim we do not understand ; and there might have been a good reason for it."

On alighting from the carriage and viewing the grounds, the singular beauty of the statuary astonished Mrs. Hamilton.

"What can they be made of?" she said, "they are not of pure gold, certainly?" For the statues shone and glittered in the sun, as if made of polished gold.

"It resists the weather and the frosts of winter, which even granite cannot withstand. It cannot be pure gold, but how much it resembles it! When we go to Moscow I will show you much more dazzling gold and silver and precious stones than we can see in St. Petersburg."

"How beautiful the fountains are, and the terraces sloping towards the sea!" said Mrs. Hamilton. "I wish the children were here to enjoy seeing the water pouring from the horn of that Bacchante, and these lovely flowers; the fuchsias are certainly as tall as trees, and so are the rose-bushes!"

"And see these oaks and lime-trees that were planted by Peter the Great himself. The people seem to reverence him," said Mr. Hamilton.

"I think he deserves it for the good he has

done in Russia. What are these smaller buildings," she asked, "there under the trees?"

"Those are wings to the large building, and show the modest taste of the 'carpenter of Saardam,' as the great Peter has been called."

"It seems so quiet here to-day, as if no one were at home: is it always so still?" asked Mrs. Hamilton.

"Ah, no indeed! You should be here in July when the court gives a *fête*, and the five hundred thousand inhabitants of St. Petersburg are invited to it. A person of rank cannot lodge with a villager, so he builds a house for the occasion. As we know this is built slightly, and will not last many years, it shows how little they dream of expense in this country for a few days' pleasure."

"Ah! I should not care to be there, on account of the ceremony; I remember laughing heartily at the story Mrs. Peyser told me, of her being admitted to the private chapel with the nobility. How dreadfully fatigued she was, waiting till the service was over; she felt faint, and begged her husband to go out with her. 'Not for your life,' he said. Then she petitioned again to be released, — while the court ladies moved not a muscle: if they were suffocating too, nobody would know it from them. And the third time

she asked to be allowed to go, her husband whispered, "Creep out if you can, unobserved. I am well known here; I cannot go, it is as much as my life is worth." He did not mean that, I suppose."

"He meant it was a breach of etiquette, which here is almost a sin, and might be followed with unpleasant consequences," he answered.

"I was so amused with nurse, who was standing by us, and is a true Yankee, irreverent of all rank."

"What did she say?"

"She was muttering to herself, and I heard her say, 'A set of upstarts, — too proud to faint!'"

"There is something intensely ridiculous to me in this Yankee trait, which is seen to such advantage in a foreign country!"

"You ought to say it is seen to disadvantage," she answered.

"No, my dear! the ridiculous form of pride that scorns all rank, and is still more proudly proud than those it scorns, amuses me very much."

"I believe you have lived away from home so long that you are almost a Russian," said his wife.

"O no! I am very fond of my home and

native land ; but I see many things to find fault with, which I hardly noticed before I went abroad."

"Then I hope it will improve us, my dear."

"I hope it will," he answered, pleasantly, for our friend James has lost much of his self-esteem since he has seen more of the world.

"Was this the summer residence of Peter?"

"It was the residence of Catherine and of the Grand Duchesses Anne and Elizabeth. The residence of our Russian Emperor is Zarskoye Selo, and, like everything to be admired here, it owes its existence to Peter. He planted avenues of plane-trees there with his own hand."

"He must have been indefatigably industrious."

"He was so. The fine castle there was built by Elizabeth, and improved afterwards by Catherine."

"Are the gardens well cared for there?"

"So well cared for, that a falling leaf is chased and caught, if they spend a day in finding it. I am told that they dust and polish the trees, and even paths in the gardens!"

"I can't believe that is true; you must have read that, as a traveller's story."

"I had it from undoubted authority, as well as seeing it myself; and the same writer says it costs one hundred thousand roubles yearly to

keep the gardens neat with all this polishing and brushing. An old, invalid soldier has five or six hundred men under him, employed to keep them in order. Every blade of grass has to be put in a proper position!" .

"It would be hard to find a proper position for one. How ridiculous! and how very artificial the garden must be! Waving grass is so lovely!"

"Perhaps they let the grass wave, for then it *bows*, and certainly that is a proper position, in this country, for us all."

"I shall think you have not become quite a Russian if you can still smile at the ceremony they use on every occasion."

"It is rather amusing to be sure, but it is quite pleasant to witness so much politeness; I am sure the children will acquire it."

"O yes! the younger ones certainly are becoming very foreign in their manners; as to the baby, he bows and smiles incessantly."

"Like all babies!"

"No, not at all like all babies! he bows his thanks for his food, and when he enters the room, and kisses his hand as he leaves us. What a very pretty custom that is, of thanking the hostess after you have dined with her! The servant — I mean the nurse, I see little of the others —

always bows her thanks after each meal. How very odd our home customs will seem to us!" she said, sighing.

"Are you still homesick?" asked Mr. Hamilton.

"O no! I was thinking of the children. It is time for us to return to them," she answered. "Do you suppose Mary has made her garden yet? Poor little thing! I can tell her she is like the Empress, who would prefer an artificial one, to having one of less beauty and rapid growth."

"What does little Mary mean to do?" he asked, in amusement.

"She is planting flowers, with their stems in the earth, and watering them diligently, hoping to keep their heads from drooping!"

"Hoping to keep their heads above water, you mean. How odd it seems,—a child has all the schemes of a man in miniature. It seems as if children were our imitators in everything. Those boys are continually searching about for information. I think I shall take them to the Hermitage again to-morrow, and to see the Foundling Hospital, where boys are educated."

"Do they educate them as well as clothe and feed them?"

"Yes. The annual revenues of the Foundling

Hospital are about six or seven hundred roubles a year. As there are sometimes five, or even seven, thousand children admitted in a year, the annual expenses of the institution are estimated at over two millions."

"But how are the expenses paid?" she asked.

"The government provides for it. The institution, first founded by the Empress Catherine in 1770, has had gifts from Alexander, Paul, and Nicholas, as well as from different private individuals, till it has become very rich, and even worth millions."

"Where are the buildings? Are they to be seen in the city?"

"The principal buildings are in St. Petersburg; the children are kept there six weeks, and then sent out to nurse among the peasants in the country. When they are six years old, they are taken back to be educated. A large number of boys are placed in the imperial manufactories of carpets, looking-glasses, paper, or something like that; and the best part of it is, that those who show talent are allowed to become artists or students, and when their education is finished, they have no obligation to pay to the institution."

"Have girls the same privileges?"

"Yes; they are educated for governesses, and

receive instruction in French, German, drawing, and music, and according to their talent they receive situations, either as servants or as teachers, and teachers from this institution are in great demand."

"I should think they would remain there in the institution."

"No ; — strangers are generally preferred. There are four or five hundred teachers in the house, French, German, and Russian. Twelve physicians belong to the establishment, who are obliged to visit the children who are out in the country also. The salaries of the teachers amount to several thousands, and the whole educational expenses of the institution amount to half a million."

"Do all the children belong to St. Petersburg?"

"O no ! they are sent from distant parts of Russia, and frequently even from Siberia, and many of them are worn out with the journey when they arrive, and many deaths occur."

"I think that must be one reason there are so very few beggars to be seen here. If the poor children are sent here, and then are allowed to support themselves as they grow up, they can help their parents, or younger children, if they should need assistance still."

"There is the first beggar I have seen in the

country," said Mr. Hamilton ; " just because we were talking of them, as the old adage says. And these people are from Moscow."

" How do you know that ? " inquired his wife.

" Partly by their dress ; they have birch sandals ; do you see them ? Let us go a little nearer."

" O dear ! Mr. Hamilton, she is blind," said Mrs. Hamilton, piteously.



"But she is not deaf, certainly, as people often seem to fancy when one cannot see."

"Let us give her some money as we go out," he said. "She is holding out her hand as if she heard our voices, and the boy is looking round at us, as if he wished to detain her."

"Look at his rough head! what a real Russian he looks!" said Mrs. Hamilton. "I wonder not to see more blind people here, for the light summer nights and the dark winter days are enough to ruin one's eyes."

"Ophthalmia is very frequent in Russia," he answered, "owing to the glare of the white snow."

"I should think it would be," she said. "I must be very careful of the children!"

"My dear, the children will not, probably, be troubled with it."

"I should like to go home," she said, meekly. The thought of ophthalmia, in addition to her other anxieties in her foreign life, was very startling at its first appearance.

"Well, let us go and see them, and you will wonder that you were anxious, if their eyes shine as they always do at your coming."

As they drove home, and drew near St. Petersburg, Mrs. Hamilton was startled by a red ball in the air, which was certainly a signal.

"Ah! what is that?" she exclaimed.

"It is only a fire!" Mr. Hamilton answered, coolly.

"Only a fire! you say."

"Certainly; it is the most common thing in the world to have fires here. Those small towers that you see above the houses, as we come nearer the city, are for signals."

"But there seem to be different signals."

"I hope you do not see but one!" he answered.

"No; I see they are just lighting the red lamp."

"That is the signal for fire at night," he said, "and the black ball is the signal for fire by day; it is so early that you could see them both. I was afraid you saw another signal which is more to be dreaded."

"There is nothing worse than fire, I hope," she said in alarm, her fears imagining some unknown horror belonging to a foreign land.

"O no! The red flags are sometimes out, which means the water is rising; and that is to be feared more than fire in this country."

"You mean because the city is built on the marsh?" she asked.

"Yes! and because it is so near the sea, that when the west wind rises there is danger from inundation."

"You are sure the fire is not near our house ; but how can you be so sure ?"

"You see the watchman on the tower there ; he has a telegraph through which he shows, by his balls and an iron pole, in what direction the fire is burning."

"You are *quite* sure it is not near our house ?"

"Are you quite sure *you* are not near our house ?" he said, laughing.

As she looked up, the merry faces of the children at the window proved to her she was at home, and Mary was calling out, "Etta mamma's domo,"—as if they knew she was confused by the lateness of the hour, and coming in by a new entrance to the city. They are so happy to meet again, let us leave them.

CHAPTER XIV.

A RIDE WITH A LAPLANDER. — THE MARKET.

"O PETER! Peter! there is the first flake of snow!" exclaimed Mary. "How strange it is! It looks more like hail than snow."

"It always looks like hail. They say it is never very deep, and they never want an umbrella in it," said Walter.

"I never wanted an umbrella in the snow at home," said bold Peter.

"I'm dreadfully afraid I can't make a snow fort or snowball with it," said Walter.

"We can make snowballs out of any snow, and as for a snow fort, there is so much fun going on here I won't spend the time for that," answered Peter. "I wonder if they will let me go and see the market? Ugo said we ought to go."

"Do stay at home, Peter, and play with me!" Mary said, caressingly.

"O you can play with your dolls, Mary! there is that beauty that you had from the Palm-Sunday Fair, with its pretty French dresses; you are not tired of that, I hope."

"No; but I do want somebody to talk to! I am so tired of speaking French and Russ, — and I forget the right word so often! but they never laugh at me when I make mistakes, as I always do when the children speak English to me. They are so proud of the few words they know, and they pronounce so drolly when they do speak English, that it makes me smile. They come in and say, 'How tee too,' and if I begin to laugh, they think it is because I am so glad to see them."

"You naughty little thing!" said Peter.

"Mary pi," said she, plaintively.

"Why don't you speak English to me?" said Peter, laughing. "Why in the world don't you say, 'I am good,' instead of that silly word 'pi,' that the baby is always saying?"

"I play so much with baby I forget, and often find myself saying a Russian word without thinking what I am saying."

"Then you are learning the language faster than I do," said Peter. "I have to think of the words first, and then I speak them. The teacher tells me to *think* in the language, but I can't do it."

"And I don't want to," said Mary, "but I can't help it. Do tell me something English, — tell me a little story."

"What shall it be about?" he asked.

"O, all about the snow and the frost."

"Well! I will call it

"THE FROST-KING.

"Once upon a time, away up in the North of Russia, there lived a little girl named Mary."

"Why, that's me!" said Mary.

"No, another little girl! And she looked out of the window one day, and what do you think she saw? She saw Jack Frost coming along. He had on a great big cap made of an iceberg, and his shoes were of icicles, all frozen together, and his eyes were emeralds, and his mouth was wide open, and when he breathed, little castles and trees and beautiful landscapes fell from his lips and flew on to the window-pane, and then handsome pictures were seen, just as if they were drawn there, and — Mary, if you look sharp, you can find them now, I dare say."

"O dear! has he been by, do you think, since we have been talking?"

"Perhaps he has; he lives in Russia, 'way up by the North Pole!"

"Really, Peter?"

"Really! Look at the pictures!" said Peter.

And really there were lovely pictures on the window-pane, — all in frost-work.

"Now I'll tell you all about it," said Peter, pointing to the window. "In the first place, here is a fir-tree, — there are always fir-trees in Russia, — and here is a fine castle with a draw-bridge by it, and see the soldiers with their spears walking over the bridge! And there is a little woman sitting under the fir-trees alone!"

"She'll be frozen!" said Mary.

"She is frozen now; she is a frost-woman, and she ran away from the castle, and the soldiers are besieging it to find her, for she is a captive princess who was stolen by the enemy!"

"Now you can read the next story yourself, and see if that is so pretty. There is a story on each window-pane, — I mean the *picture* is there, and you can find out the story yourself, if you are ingenious."

"But your story did not have any end. Did they find the princess?" asked Mary.

"No; they never found her," said Peter. "She melted away!"

"Melted away! that was dreadful! I don't like that ending."

"That was because she cried so much! She sat under the trees and cried, and the sun came and shone on her, and she turned into water, because she would not stop crying. She became a great tear!"

"Peter, what are you doing?" said his mother, who entered the room.

"He has been telling me a nice story, mother, only it does not end well."

"Nobody ends well who cries so much!" said Peter.

Mrs. Hamilton shook her head at Peter, for Mary began to look serious, and thought, if she should cry, it might be a little dangerous for little girls, if a princess was so unfortunate.

"Tell her about the heart pictures, Peter; you ought not to make up stories to tease her."

"I would not tease her for the world, mamma; I was only showing her how she could find pictures in the frost on the window; but I'll tell her the verses, to please her. Listen, little Mary, listen carefully."

PICTURES.

Made for the little children
Are Pictures, everywhere,
Painted on the flying clouds,
And shining in the air.

The frost doth make small people
Walk on the window-pane,
And in the fire glowing
We see them shine again.

Yes, for the little children
Are Pictures everywhere,
Painted on the cloud-wings,
And shining in the air.

If in the lake we're gazing,
A picture there is drawn
Of trees, the sky at sunset,
And moon with silver horn.

And if we're closely peeping
Deep, deep down, we can see,
Far in the reeds and rushes,
A little *you* and *me*!

Two tiny faces gazing
Straight up into our own,
As if they had been painted,
And in the water thrown.

The sun, when brightly shining,
Daguerrotyped them there, —
Mine is brown as berry,
Yours is sweet and fair.

Thus, if we're good, (or naughty,)
Straight on our hearts is thrown
A little picture, painted,
So all the truth is known!

We never can forget it,
It's deeply printed there,
And with us all our life-time
We must the picture wear.

Remember, if you're tempted
A naughty child to be,
The little picture's painting,
If no one else can see!

And when you're ill and lonely,
Or when you're aged grown,
There it will be shining,
As when at first it shone.

Think, think how many pictures
Must on our hearts be worn;
And those that tell we're wicked
So heavily are borne!

Then do some brave, good action,
(Some kindness, if you can,)
That you'll be proud to gaze on,
When you are grown a man.

And make your life so perfect,
That on your heart may lie
A pure, unclouded heaven,
Reflected from the sky.

N. B. If you're a little naughty,
And to be good you try,
That may rub out the picture
Before the ink is dry."

"That's nice!" said Mary, clapping her hands.
"Now I will look out of the window, and see
the snow and watch it, and see if I can tell where
the flakes go; I know where they come from,—
straight out of the sky, where they are shaking
the great feather-beds (those white clouds we
saw yesterday)."

"Whose feather-beds are they, Mary?"

"Why, the people who live up there, 'in fields
beyond the sky,' my hymn says."

"I like the funny people here best, mother.
May I go with Ugo this morning when he goes
to market?"

"If you will put on your fur coat and your mittens; you must be very careful, as it is your first winter in Russia, and winter begins here in October and does not end till May!" she said, with a sigh.

"*I* think it is *fine*, mother! I wish it would be always winter!"

So saying, he ran out, leaving Mary to ponder over the pictures on the window-pane; and as I cannot give you the frost-picture, I will give you the picture of Peter and Ugo at the Market.

You will know Ugo by his moustache; he does not look exactly like the peasants who are bargaining so keenly over the sledge. There are two peasant-women, who are wondering which piece of pork is best for them, and still Peter is standing there, waiting more silently than he would do if he could understand all they were saying, or if he could speak enough Russ to make himself understood. Ugo has left the sledge in his care, (we never say sled in this country,) and Peter, with his white apron on, is playing at being market-boy.

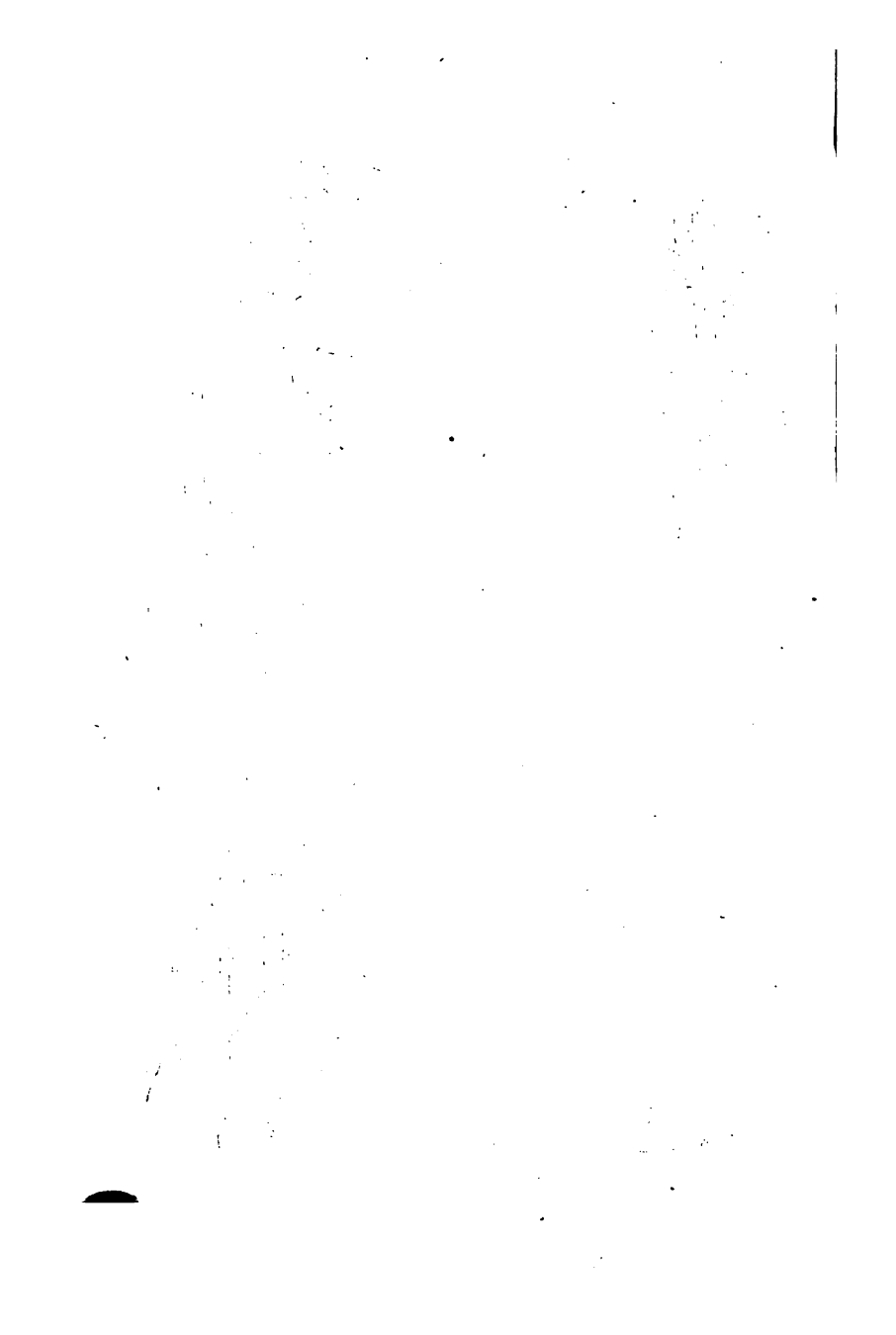
The stacks of hay that you see there are imported from the country. Immense quantities are brought in for sale, and quantities of wood, also, for consumption in the great city of St. Petersburg. You must always remember that

the city is built on a morass, and that large trees would not grow there, except those that are planted with great care in the ornamental grounds of the palaces, and that hay enough for the horses of the army and the court would not grow there, as the waters of the Gulf are salt, and the marshy grass is only used for bedding. So the hay, the wood, and the water are brought into the city from a distance. Peter the Great knew these disadvantages, but he knew the importance of his position on the sea-coast, and he selected it for his great city, and has been repaid by the splendor and beauty of it, though he did not live long enough to see its perfection.

For many years, — owing to the severe frosts, which even granite cannot withstand without breaking, — for many years, and until very recently, gas could not be used, owing to the breaking of the pipes. That difficulty has been overcome, and now nothing is wanting to add to the beauty of this fine city.

You can see that the hogs in the market are frozen hard as stone; and if you could see a little more, you would see the geese brought, frozen, from China, a distance of four thousand miles, and the swans from Livonia. Bears, caught in the neighboring forests, where they still run about, and sometimes, it is said, ap-





proach the confines of the city. One came near our house one day, but we don't dare to let the children know it. Hares, frozen while running, with their ears pointed and legs outstretched as if caught by Jack Frost himself, while out hunting. Frozen squirrels, partridges, and grouse are to be seen here ; and all these different varieties of smaller game are frozen and hung up as ornaments over the stall of the butcher. The pigeons are considered sacred, and they are not eaten in Russia by the people, but are trained as pets by their owners.

Little singing-birds are found here in cages, but they never have a drop of water to quench their thirst ; only frozen snow is placed in a little trough before them, where they wet their beaks and melt it with the warmth. "Why is that?" you ask ; "that is cruel !" Cannot you guess the reason ? Because it is so cold the water would be frozen instantly. If you should throw a flower from the window, it would freeze on its way to the ground, or perhaps cling like an icicle to the window-sill.

Should you like to live in this cold country ? I am sure you would, if you could see the sledge that Peter saw, on his way home from market, that was driven by a real Laplander on the ice. Then I know you would feel as pleased

as he was, and call out as he did in Russ, "Pad-yeel! Padyum te!" which only means, "Come here! Will you come here?"

And the Laplander came, as he was bidden, and Peter asked for a ride, and Ugo told the Laplander in Russ what he wanted, and then away Peter flew over the ice, like a real Laplander.

Do you suppose the reindeer have such fine, branching horns and are such noble-looking animals as we might think from seeing Landseer's beautiful pictures of them? And that the Laplander and his sledge look as well as they do in the fine paintings we sometimes see?

I should be sorry if you should feel as disappointed as Peter did at the sight of them. For they are very small, not much larger than a Newfoundland dog, but they do have immense horns, and when Peter, in the uncomfortable little sledge covered with fur and lined with it, flew rapidly over the ice on the river, with the Laplander guiding the sledge by a rope fastened to the horns of the reindeer, then he thought, as he went along so swiftly, "Now I have all I wanted! Now I can tell my cousins, and all my friends in America, that I have had a ride with a real Laplander and a live reindeer! But I need not tell them how disappointed

I am in it; and perhaps I am not required to say how much better a good sleigh-ride is, with a fast trotting-horse and bells on his neck (they never have bells nor blinders here); but as to this rope and this ugly Laplander, if it were not for the strangeness of the thing, I would rather be at home!"

Then, as he went along a little farther, and the novelty wore off, and he looked at the solemn little Laplander wrapped up in bear-skins to the nose, and thought of the grand idea he had formed of the fine sledges and immense reindeer as large as horses, driven by a tall, handsome man in rich skins, then he began to laugh at his disappointment, and shook in his mirth, till the serious little Laplander looked at him in wonder. But Peter laughed on, and the Laplander, understanding *this* language, laughed too. As that is the best way to bear a disappointment, let us leave Peter and see what they are doing at home.

CHAPTER XV.

CHURCH OF KESAN. — FORTRESS. — ISAAC'S CHURCH.

It was at dinner ; the gas was burning brightly, and though it was but half past two in the afternoon, it was so dark that it was already night.

“ Where is that boy Peter ? ” said his father. “ If he does not come home soon, he shall not go with us to see the ice-cutting and to have a ride on the ice-hills.”

Peter entered as his father was saying these words.

“ You have returned just in time, Peter ; you would have lost your ride to-morrow if you had not come in.”

“ And I should have lost a ride to-day if I had come sooner, sir. An old Laplander took me out on his sledge, and the days are so short that I could not get home before ! ”

“ That boy is always ready with an excuse. He blames the days for being so short, instead of himself for staying out so late. You have missed seeing the flags in the churches, young gentleman.”

"O, do tell me about them, please, papa! I wanted to go so much with you when you went there!"

"You know that all the churches are adorned with trophies gained in battle with different countries. The Kesan church has the most, and



they are hung up as ornaments on the pillars of the church. There are flags taken from the different nations, and keys of French and of German towns."

"And are the flags much torn, papa? as if they fought boldly, as our soldiers do."

"The French flags are so torn that sometimes only a fragment is left, and even the flag-staff alone has been brought away in some cases, the flag having been destroyed, to keep it from the enemy."

"And did the Persians and Turks fight as well?"

"No; I must say it seemed as if the Turkish and Persian flags were given up without so much struggle; some looked fresh and uninjured. The Turkish flag was a handsome piece of crimson cloth with a crescent on it."

"And what were the Persian ones? were they as handsome?"

"They were splendid!" said Walter. "They had a great silver hand on them as large as a real hand."

"And what keys would they want to fight about?" asked Peter.

"Why," said Walter, "don't you know they have the keys of Hamburg, Dresden, and many other cities where the Russians have fought?"

"Yes, they have keys of German, French, and Netherland cities," said his father.

"After we went to the church of Kesan, we visited the church of Peter and Paul in the fortress. You can see the small spire at any time rising above the city; it is three hundred and forty feet high."

"It is that spire, Peter, that you said looked like a knitting-needle, and shines like gold in the sun," said Walter.

"O, I remember it now, and I have a picture

of it to carry home to America. I shall value these pictures more, now that I have a description of them."

"If you could have seen the simplicity of this burial-place of the Emperors, my boy, you would have been surprised. There is nothing for each but a simple stone sarcophagus, with a red cloth over it, in the church."

"I wondered how often they would have to put a new cloth on there, they looked so clean," said Walter.

"Who but a child would have had such a strange idea!" said Mrs. Hamilton. "Was there an inscription on the pall?"

"Only these few words: 'His Imperial Majesty Peter the First'; and sometimes nothing but initial letters. The keys of some Polish fortress lie on the sarcophagus of the Grand Duke Constantine. A hundred cannon defend the place, and a garrison of three thousand men; and this fortress cannot be attacked until all St. Petersburg is in ruins."

"Why are they so very particular about *this* fortress?" asked Peter.

"Why, don't you understand that all the Emperors are buried here, and so they consider it a sacred spot?" said Walter.

"Not *all* the Emperors, my boy; only the

Emperors since Peter the Great. The former Emperors are all buried in Moscow."

"Then let us go to Moscow, father, and see what is to be seen there," said Walter.

"O yes, father! Let us go to Moscow!" echoed Peter.

"Very well, we'll ask your mother about it; you don't want to go to-night, certainly!" he answered.

"O no! not to-night! but may we go?"

"Yes; I mean to do so this winter. But you have not seen the ice-hills yet, and the cutting of ice on the Neva."

"Shall we go to-morrow, papa, and see that?"

"Yes, if you will listen to all I want you to hear this evening; I wish you to remember all about the fortress; that around the sarcophagi and on the pillars in the churches, flags and other trophies are suspended. The Persian flag is a long, triangular piece of silk stuff trimmed with lace; in the centre of it is a panther, and over his back there is a great sun."

"What does that represent, father?"

"I don't know, my dear; but the Persians worshipped the sun."

"Which is the handsomest church in St. Petersburg, father?"

"Isaac's Church, which is just finished. It

stands among the finest buildings, in the most open space in the city. It was commenced by Nicholas I. and is finished by Alexander II. It is composed entirely of blocks of granite and of polished marble, and built on immense piles sunk in the swampy soil. There are three flights of steps, of great width, that look like polished marble, and are of reddish granite, on each side of the church. There are three steps to ascend, and then a landing-place, then you mount three more and rest again. These steps lead to the four entrances of the church, that are surrounded by immense pillars. They are sixty feet high, and seven feet in diameter. The central dome is on smaller pillars, and is twice as high as they are, and much broader than it is high. It is covered with gold, and glitters like the sun."

"Is it *real* gold, father?" asked Mary.

"It is copper covered with gold. Then there are four smaller domes, and on the top of the large cupola there is a rotunda with a gilded cross. On each side there is a portico, with pillars leading to the church."

"Tell him about the consecration of the church, papa; that was the best part; just like Cinderella and the glass slipper!"

"Why, Mary, what do you mean?" asked her father.

"The gold coaches, papa, and the Emperor's mother, who sat in one of the chairs, to look on when she was tired, and was like Cinderella's godmother, who rode away in a gold coach,—only this is all true, you know!"

"Well, Mary! in the first place, the steps of the church were covered with crimson velvet, only for this occasion of the dedication."

"But whenever the Emperor's family go anywhere they have red velvet to walk on," said Mary.

"Yes; and at this ceremony the street around the church was covered with crimson velvet for their imperial feet. They entered the church, and the priests and chanters walked with them round it, chanting beautiful music. When the ceremony was all over they walked round the outside of the church on the velvet,—all but the old mother of the Empress, who had a chair on the sidewalk, and gazed at the show. Then they entered their splendid gold coaches and rode away."

"Were the coaches very handsome, like Cinderella's?" asked Mary.

"They seemed to be made of solid gold. The spokes of the high wheels were of ornamental work, with a broad rim of gold round the edge."

"How many gold coaches were there?"

"Perhaps twelve, which always appear on state occasions. The horses are all one color, and they pranced so high that they were held by long bands, fastened to an arch over their heads, — like the usual harness in Russia, — which was held by men in livery."

"How did you see the ceremony?"

"Only from a window, which was hired for us by a Russian, at a very high price."

"What other churches are there so handsome?"

"There are none equal to this in beauty, for the pillars are of malachite and lapis-lazuli. So that the inside of the church is green and blue and gold."

"Just the color of the dragon-flies at the side of the brook at home," said Mary.

"I am glad Mary likes and remembers home so well!" said her father. "But the interior of the church of Kesan is very splendid too. There are immense pillars of solid silver to the sanctuary; the doors, doorways, and beams are made of it. The railing around the altar, the arches twenty feet high above it, and all the picture-frames, are of solid silver!"

"It must look like Aladdin's lamp, — like the wonderful palace that was built in a night!" said Walter.

"How came they to have so much silver that it could be used for building?" said Mrs. Hamilton.

"It was presented to the church by the Cossacks, and it is said that hundreds of soup-tureens and tea-pots, and thousands of dozens of silver spoons belonging to the French and Germans, must have been melted down for this offering."

"Are there any convents here, papa?" asked Walter.

"There are two convents. One is called the Smolnoi Convent, dedicated to the education of young girls, and five hundred are brought up there at the expense of the government. The balustrades of the sanctuary are made of glass, and with doors where the pillars are of gold, ornamented with exquisite carvings. The other convent is that of St. Alexander Nevsky, founded by Peter the Great, in honor of the Grand Duke Alexander, who defeated the Swedes here. Catherine II., who built the cathedral, sent the pearls from Persia, and precious stones from Siberia, to adorn the interior. There are portraits of Peter the Great and Catherine II. hanging before the altar, and a monument of silver to Alexander Nevsky in the side chapel."

"Papa, please tell us about the regiment of

guards founded by Peter the Great, which is one of the oldest regiments, and who have a church where the fence is made of cannon," asked Walter.

"That interests me the most!" said Peter.

"It is not handsome, of course," said Mr. Hamilton; "but it is interesting, because it is more ornamented by trophies than any other church. It is surrounded by a fence of cannon, which form the posts, and chains are suspended from them, with the two-headed eagle in iron as an ornament. Behind the fence are cannon-balls, piled up in pyramids, to form ornamental designs. All these are taken from the Turks and the French. The church is decorated with flags, and its pillars have been compared to 'palm-trees, of which every leaf is a lance.'"

"I should like to hear about the monument in silver," said Mary.

"Mary, it is a 'silver mountain,' with silver angels on it, as big as a man, holding trumpets and silver flowers," said Peter.

"How big is the mountain?" said Mary. "A silver mountain! — that is more astonishing than any story yet!"

"It is fifteen feet high!" said Peter.

"How much does it weigh in solid silver?" asked Mrs. Hamilton.

"I should think there were not less than five thousand pounds of solid silver in it," replied Mr. Hamilton.

"It does seem just like the stories in the Arabian Nights!" said Walter.

"The presents sent by the Persians to Russia, on one occasion, were like a fairy story, I grant, — when the Persian prince drove in an imperial equipage with six horses, followed by elephants that had on leather boots to protect them from the cold, and carried towers on their backs, filled with warriors, and lions and tigers in cages lined with double bear-skins, because it was winter when they came. And what was most like Aladdin's lamp, there were men carrying dishes of gold, containing precious stones and gold stuffs."

"That is *just* like the fairy stories! — they always wear gold stuffs!" said Mary. "Where did Walter find that story?"

"I found it in my history, which you are always laughing at me about. There are many more wonderful stories there, such as you would read in a fairy-story book and would think dull in your history. Are we going to see the ice-hills to-morrow, papa?"

"Yes, if you are quite ready to say good-night now?"

“ But if you would tell us about the ice-hills first ! ” they petitioned.

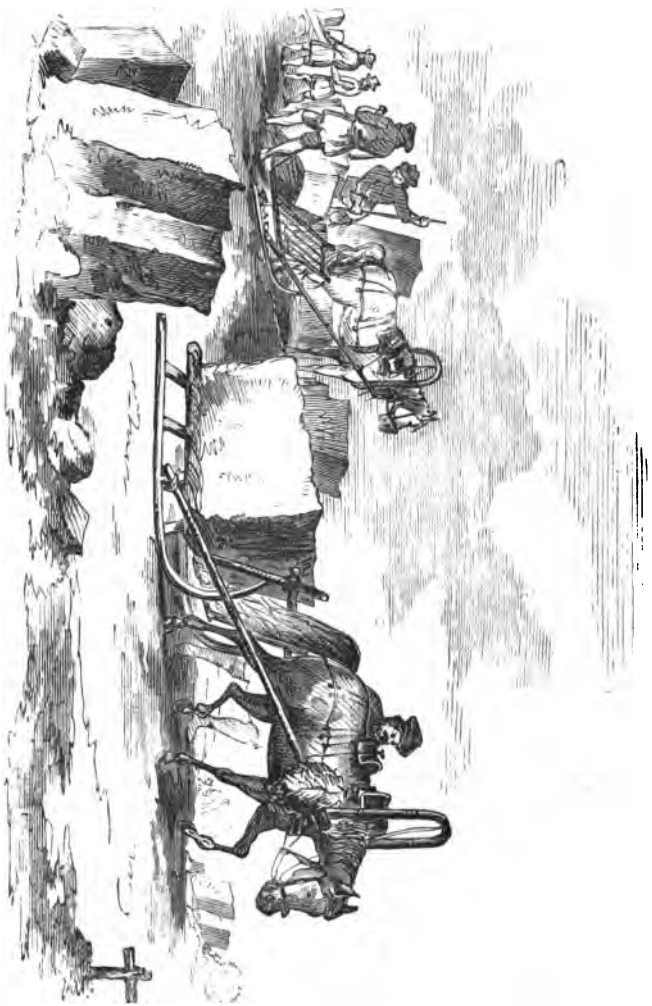
But their father was inexorable. Had they not heard about the churches and the procession of the Persians, and much more that I forget, — and you too, — and were they not as tired as you must be now ? So good night !

CHAPTER XVI.

ICE-HILLS AND ICE CUTTING.

THE ice-hills of the Russians are both public and private. During the holidays they are a source of great amusement to them, and are erected in different sections of the city. The private hills, or those erected by individuals, are frequented by the nobility and gentry. The sleds are of iron, and cushioned, very long and narrow. The gentleman steers with both hands behind him, placed upon the ice, while the lady is seated in front, both facing the descent, which at the start is about thirty degrees declination ; so that you descend with bird-like speed, gradually lessening as you approach the opposite ice-hill. The same course is observed in returning. The course, or track, after the first plunge, is horizontal, composed of blocks of ice, reaching from the top of each hill to the foot of the opposite one.

The buildings are of wood, and thirty feet high ; on the top there is a room with fire and



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refreshments, where the pleasure-seeker may enjoy the comforts of a fireside and a select party of friends.

The snow falls very gently, and the snow-flakes appear like small particles of pulverized ice, that does not adhere to your dress. The imperial family may be seen walking abroad, without any umbrella, in one of these showers of snow. As there is no wind stirring in winter, storms and thaws are unknown, and a perfect stillness pervades the cold atmosphere, whilst the keen winds of autumn and winter are cutting in the extreme.

The principal sidewalks of the city are swept after each fall of snow, and sanded, or earth is strewn upon the walk.

The promise of viewing the ice-cutting was kept the next day, by the boys and Mr. Hamilton, who took a sledge and drove out towards the river Neva. The departure of the ice, as I have already told you, is a celebration in Russia. As the other ports of the Baltic are open before this, many vessels are always waiting to hear the important news of the opening of the Neva.

During the excessively hot and short summer in St. Petersburg, immense quantities of ice are consumed. It is said that five hundred thousand sledge-loads of ice are taken from the river in

one season. The process of ice-cutting is well worth seeing; and, having viewed churches, public buildings, and hospitals, our young people thought it quite time to see this interesting winter spectacle.

And Peter was in high spirits at the idea of the amusement. "So much better than snow-balling, Walter," he said; "there is so much fun here, I never shall be contented in America again."

"That would be a poor recompense to me for your expensive journey and the pleasure you have had," answered Mr. Hamilton.

"O, well, I did not exactly mean that, you know!"

"You will please say what you exactly mean in future!" said his father, loftily.

I thought how much that seemed like the boy James, whom we formerly knew, whose advice and instruction to the younger children always made us feel so insignificant. I remembered the old lines of Wordsworth that said,

"The child is father of the man!"

and I wondered if he had not had a prophetic eye, and seen some of the youths of the present day, who are so fond of instructing their parents and of giving sage counsel to them. Unless we hurry, that ice-cutting will be over before we arrive!

The workmen begin by clearing the snow away and marking the size of the blocks to be cut on the ice. When that is done, the workmen cut deep trenches round the square marked out; as the ice is four or five feet thick, the men are almost hidden in the trenches, like a miner at his work. There is left a thickness of ice sufficient to support a man, which must be afterwards broken by hand. So they mount upon the block, from out the pit they have made for themselves, and strike, at the same moment, with heavy irons, all along the narrow line left in the bottom of the trench. This large block, which breaks just where it is marked,—like a small bit if you draw a line on it,—this is divided in smaller pieces and carried away on sledges to the city. As the immense lumps lie on the snow they are said to look green, which we notice in all ice that is painted in a picture, but which I cannot say I ever noticed in real ice before.

I have told you before about the bridges of boats, which are used as soon as the breaking up of the ice is known and announced by the firing of cannon. A space is cleared in the river, a few days before this, for the boats to glide to their proper places; each pontoon has its own anchor and is securely fastened to piles. The

Russians are so fond of these bridges, that they are put up and taken to pieces twice a day if necessary, as it sometimes is, owing to the ice that floats in from Lake Ladoga.

After looking at this process till they had found the best way of ice-cutting and of securing pontoon bridges, the boys hastened home, to give a detailed account to their unsuspecting mother, who was always ready to be amused or deceived by their astonishing recitals.

The bridges of boats, and the water-carriers, who are employed to bring water from the Neva, every day, to supply the inhabitants, — as there



are no wells in the city, — seemed to us among the strangest things we had seen in this strange country.

Peter's account of the ice-cutting, where the men disappeared from view entirely, and then where each came up out of the trench, flourishing his iron pike, — like Neptune from the sea, with his trident, — will not be of much interest to you ; but when the family met together in the evening, and were talking of seeing new cities and of viewing other spectacles, then old nurse, who was listening attentively and wondering — as ever — why people could not stay at home, within their own boundaries, — then she burst out in a fresh blaze of indignation, saying, “ I should not wonder if you went to Pekin, or to see the Khan of Tartary himself ! What in the world are you looking out more Spectacles for ? for I declare you make nothing but a Spectacle of yourselves ! ”

But if we *should* go where the wonderful Chinese dwell, — those “ people who live in glass-houses and never throw stones,” — let us hope, if we do visit that rare country, that you will go with us ! Will you promise ? and will you go ? Good by !

THE END.



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